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**PREACHERS AND
PREACHING**

PREACHERS AND PREACHING

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FOREWORD

The chapters which constitute this volume, offered under the caption of "Preachers and Preaching," were originally prepared as lectures and delivered in the spring of 1923, in accordance with the provisions of the Kessler Foundation, before the faculty, students and friends of Hamma Divinity School, connected with Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio. We are well aware that the field of homiletics has been covered ably and comprehensively by a wide and varied literature upon the subject; and that especially, in recent years, there has been a steady stream of volumes issuing from the presses dealing in varied manner with the art of Christian preaching, some of them written by authors of distinguished ability. It was therefore with considerable hesitation that we considered the publication of the present volume, but we consented to it with the humble hope that, while these chapters follow to a considerable degree the beaten paths, there might be some new view-points and some things put in a different way, which would prove helpful and stimulating not only to young ministers, but to all our brethren in the ministry.

The following chapters, it may be said frankly, are written from a conservative point of view, for the author is strongly conservative in his theological views and convictions. A preacher's theology will

certainly influence and form his homiletics. We believe in the integrity, the power and the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures; we believe in Christ as our divine Lord and Saviour; we believe in the Gospel of salvation from sin and death through our Lord's death and atonement upon the cross; and we believe that this salvation should ever be the heart and substance of the Church's preaching. The preacher is a preacher of salvation first of all. These convictions mold our views upon the subject matter under consideration.

In the preparation of this volume, we have read somewhat widely and have consulted numerous works which have dealt with our subject. Particularly, we have made free use of historical sources in the preparation of the first chapter, inasmuch as the material needed for this historical sketch could not be secured by first-hand investigation. Our guiding purpose has been to marshal facts drawn from history and experience, in such a practical way that they might prove both interesting and useful to others. It is the earnest prayer of the author that this volume, the fruit of his research, may contribute, at least in some small measure, to the encouragement and the inspiring of many loyal and faithful preachers of the everlasting Gospel of Christ, our Lord,—all for the glory of God and the spread of His Kingdom.

ARTHUR H. SMITH.

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Preachers and Preaching

LECTURE I.

THE PLACE OF PREACHING IN THE CHURCH'S HISTORY

In undertaking this series of lectures on the general theme of *Preachers and Preaching*, we wish to consider the function of preaching in the history and life of the Church and some of the principles which concern the actual making and preaching of the sermon, together with the pastor's own spiritual life as a very definite factor in the effectiveness of his ministry. At the beginning, we wish to speak to you in this first lecture of the *history of preaching*, just as briefly as may be consistent with a reasonably adequate presentation of the place which Christian preaching has held in the history of the Church.

With this purpose in view, some preliminary definitions need first to be considered. Preaching has usually been defined simply and literally as "the act of delivering religious discourses." However, the more particular concept of Christian preaching can only be reached by considering the clear objective of this "great and peculiar appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ," namely, that of making Christ known to the world for the salvation of men.

Christian preaching, therefore, is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ for the evangelization of lost souls and the edification of believers. "It represents an institution of Christianity which has been in existence some nineteen centuries, and an agency of religious influence destined to continue in action throughout the whole period of human affairs." Preaching is a peculiar characteristic of the Christian religion and, as an agency of propaganda and witness bearing, differentiates it from all other faiths.

The authority for the office of preaching is to be found in our Lord Himself. Jesus from the beginning of His earthly ministry taught and preached, often with a few for his audience, sometimes with great multitudes listening with absorbed attention to His message. Christ was a preacher, but He also called and ordained other preachers. In His early ministry, it is recorded that He selected disciples from among His hearers and "he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:14). He said to them, "What I tell you in darkness that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the house tops" (Mark 10:27), and the Lord made it clear that according to prophecy, the preaching of the Gospel to the "poor," that is, to the humble, the sinner, to all that need, would be a characteristic of His kingdom. And then, at the close of His ministry, before the Ascension, Jesus gave to the disciple that never-to-be-forgotten

commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

It is certain, therefore, that it is our Lord's purpose that His kingdom should be advanced by the agency of preaching. This was also the conviction of St. Paul, for he said, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). Thus then, was instituted the office of the preacher of the Gospel. A preacher is a disciple of Christ, called by God through the Church to bear witness to the truth and to preach the glad tidings of salvation to a lost and suffering world. His is the highest and noblest calling of which it is possible to conceive. His preaching embodies primarily the essential element of instruction, but by reason of the moral grandeur of its message and appeal, it rises to a loftier level than that of lecturing or of plain didactic discourse. The field of the highest persuasive eloquence is ever open for true preaching, for it aims to enlighten the minds and quicken the consciences and persuade the wills of men, "as a means of affecting their earthly character and their eternal destiny." Thereby it rises above all secular oratory in power of appeal.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF PREACHING

In the Old Testament dispensation there were occasional preachers, such as the prophets especially, who appeared at intervals, in times of great

spiritual crises in the nation's life, to proclaim with fiery zeal the special messages of the Lord. But preaching as an institution and as a regular element of worship was but little known among the Jews. In the later synagogue worship there was explanation of the law and the prophets but not ordered preaching as we understand it now.

John the Baptist, when he appeared on the banks of the Jordan, came as the last of the great prophet-preachers and as the fore-runner, preparing the way for the ministry and the redeeming work of our Saviour. He was a true preacher, conscious of the wonder of his message, and his preaching was marked by fearlessness, intensity of conviction, burning zeal and evangelistic appeal. When Christ began His ministry of teaching and healing, His preaching soon arrested attention for it was unique in the highest degree, being authoritative, original, surprisingly simple in its appeal to the common mind, sometimes polemical, more often breathing the power of sympathy and love, profoundly spiritual but always practical in application to daily life. Christ must always stand out as our one divine Exemplar and Model in the art and power of preaching.

After the ascension of Christ and with the Day of Pentecost, preaching became common and constant and a peculiar mark of the Christian religion and the Church. At Pentecost the apostles were empowered and their ministry of preaching vitalized by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the great

sermon of Simon Peter and those of the rest of the apostles were effective in bringing three thousand converts into the Church. From this time forward, in their expanding work of evangelization, whether in the temple, in synagogues, in prisons, or along thronged streets and highways, the apostles preached Christ crucified and risen as "the power of God unto salvation" and as "the wisdom of God." When they were "scattered abroad" by persecution, they continued to preach and "they went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4). Thus was the Gospel diffused through the Roman world in the course of the first century. It may be added here that some scholars are of the opinion that many of the apostolical Epistles are really written sermons, inspired of course, copies of which were sent to distant churches, and particularly is this believed to be true of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which indeed bears many of the marks of a sermon. Clement and Origen both hold the theory that it was a sermon preached by St. Paul and reported by some other person, very probably Luke. It is at least plain that most of the Epistles reveal the fervid style of the sermon.

During the two centuries following the era of the apostles, preaching was general if not universal among the Christian churches, struggling as they were to survive the frequent Roman persecutions. While we have the extensive writings of the ante-Nicene Fathers, it is strange that we have but a few sermon fragments which have been pre-

served either from them or the Apostolic Fathers. There were great preachers, however, as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, who was an orator of great power, and especially Origen. Perhaps one reason for the dearth of sermonic remains from these centuries is to be found in the fact that most of the preaching was informal, the sermons being homilies or talks instead of set and ordered discourses. Thus, they were not so likely to be preserved. This preaching must have been worthy and fruitful, however, judging from a famous passage in Chrysostom's homilies (Homily 19, on the Statues), in which he bestows generous and hearty praise upon the country pastors around Antioch for their faithful and productive preaching. Mention has already been made of the celebrated Origen who lived from A. D. 186 to 253. His active career marked a distinct advance in the art of preaching, both as to Biblical learning and homiletic form. He was easily first among the Church Fathers in the exegetical study and exposition of the Bible text, while he dignified and popularized the practice of allegorizing. Later, this latter practice was carried to a weakening and absurd extreme, but in Origen's hands, it was an instrument of beauty and power. Origen also developed the form of orderly Christian discourse, although the homily was yet without that essential unity of structure, which we now consider so necessary. Origen was not only a great preacher but also a great educator. For nearly thirty years he

was chief catechist, or, as we would say, theological professor, at Alexandria, and after his banishment when he lived at Cæsarea in Palestine, he taught for twenty years more, always with many students sitting at his feet. All these years he preached nearly every day, something which we would consider ourselves utterly incapable of doing.

During the century and a half which followed the period of Origen, Christianity came to its triumph in the Roman Empire while it established theological schools and religious libraries, which grew in number and effectiveness. Intelligence increased among the Christians and a larger portion of the ministers must have been well educated men, in consequence of which we now find sermons taken down in shorthand and circulated (Dr. Broadus, *History of Preaching*. P. 58). Yet, none of these sermons are now in existence. Among the able preachers of this period were Hippolytus, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Cyprian, and others. Attendance upon church and preaching had now become fashionable and popular and it was easy for the Christian preacher to reach large audiences with his message.

The great Arian controversy which rent the Church served to bring to the front many strong preachers. Many of the Arian preachers were able men, well educated and deeply in earnest. On the Trinitarian side of the struggle, Athanasius is easily the chief although none of his homilies remain today. His style was simple, direct, vigorous, often rising to convincing eloquence. Others were

Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephraem the Syrian, Macarius, the Egyptian monk, and Asterius, bishop of Amasea in Pontus. Among the great Greek preachers were Basil the Great (A. D. 329-379), who deserves more extended study, Gregory of Nyssa, a profound thinker in philosophy, Gregory Nazianzen (A. D. 329-389), the first great hymn writer.

But the one outstanding figure in the second half of the fourth century is John Chrysostom, the "golden-mouthed" (A. D. 347-407). He was of a wealthy and distinguished family of Antioch and was carefully educated. He first chose the law but later turned to the ministry, spending years in the close study of the Scriptures, with the result, it is said, that he knew almost the whole Bible by heart. His active work as a preacher included only twelve years at Antioch and six years in Constantinople, eighteen in all, but they were wonderfully fruitful years in which he won imperishable fame and in which Christian preaching came to its flowering. Chrysostom discarded the allegorizing method which Origen had popularized and made his sermons plain, direct, straightforward expositions of the Word of God so that they are called a "treasury of exegesis," while they are also "models of eloquence." His sermons, marked by fearlessness, spiritual power, intensity of conviction, stirred all of the imperial city of Constantinople and pricked the consciences of the wicked imperial household until the empress revenged herself by securing Chrysostom's banishment.

About one thousand of the sermons of Chrysostom have been left and are preserved to this day. Only one other preacher has ever left as many as a thousand published sermons, and that one is Spurgeon. In this connection one writer has remarked, "In our impatient age and country, when so many think time spent in preparation is time lost, it is well to remember that the two most celebrated preachers of the early Christian centuries began to preach, Chrysostom at thirty-nine, and Augustine at thirty-six." (Broadus). If you would be great preachers of the Gospel, do not grudge the time for adequate preparation. Chrysostom's preaching may have had its faults, but without question he has never had a superior. Dr. Broadus describes a great preacher as "One who can touch every chord of human feeling, treat every interest of human life, draw illustrations from every object and relation of the known universe, and use all to gain acceptance and obedience for the gospel of salvation. No preacher has ever come nearer this than Chrysostom, perhaps none, on the whole, so near." (History of Preaching. P. 78). He has been rarely equaled in the treatment both of doctrinal and moral subjects and he has been rightly adjudged "the prince of expository preachers."

Chrysostom was a Christian Greek and it was the Greek Church which produced the most of the great preachers of these early centuries. There were Latin preachers also in this period but only two whose names stand out as conspicuously great,

Ambrose and Augustine. Ambrose (A. D. 340-397), came from a distinguished family and was prepared for the law, which he practiced at Milan. He suddenly changed to the ministry and was made bishop by the call of the people. He was a man of high character, great ability and striking appearance. As a preacher he possessed eloquence and a smooth, flowing style, but he followed the common allegorizing method of applying the Scriptures.

St. Augustine (A. D. 354-430), was converted under the preaching of Ambrose and is remembered especially as a great master of Christian theology. The theology of the Protestant Reformation was shaped largely by his teaching. Luther constantly showed the influence of Augustine, and Calvin built much of his system upon his teaching. But Augustine was also a great and productive preacher and some three hundred and sixty of his sermons remain to this day. These are marked by power and a notable freedom, usually controlled, however, by a sound judgment. He had an aptitude for making pithy phrases and expounded the text carefully, fully and impressively.

It is noteworthy that many of these famous preachers began in some other calling, frequently the law, before they entered upon the responsible duties of the priesthood. Many also were of high social position, coming from families of prominence. They were well educated men having received their training in the great universities of the time, and

following with long courses of theological study. Their preparation for preaching was thorough and much longer than that usually secured in our day. It is further noteworthy that every one of these great preachers had given special attention to the study of oratory and had enlisted this practical art in the service of his preaching. Charles Francis Adams once declared "that in no country at the present day has public speaking such ample opportunities for exerting influence as in America, and in no civilized country is the art of public speaking so little studied." If this was true in Mr. Adams' day, it is even more true in our time, and yet, for us as ministers, oratory is such an important aid to the proclamation of the Gospel. It would be well for the young men who contemplate the Christian ministry as their life calling, to give much attention to the art of public speaking.

THE MEDIEVAL CENTURIES

The preaching of the early Christian Church reached its culmination in the brilliant fame of Chrysostom and Augustine and then preaching "suddenly and entirely ceased to show any remarkable power." After these great men, for six or seven centuries there were no really great preachers whose sermons were worthy of preservation. The explanation of this startling change it is not difficult to find, for several influences were slowly and steadily developing with the tendency to limit both the number of preachers and the work and

influence of preaching. One of these influences was that of the powerful movement of asceticism which led thousands of the best and most earnest men mistakenly to seek a hermit's life in deserts and caves and then later to enter monasteries with the erroneous notion that complete separation from the world would best promote a spiritual life and service which would be acceptable to God. Those, who might have been useful preachers of the Gospel, were thus withdrawn from that active service of the Church which might have touched the people for good.

Another of these adverse influences was the ceremonialism which developed with special rapidity after the papacy had taken shape and gathered power and which tended to give the form of worship a superior place to that of preaching. The result was that the preaching office was gradually withdrawn from the majority of the common clergy and centered for the large part in the bishops. Still another of these influential tendencies was the gathering of increasing secular influence and temporal power into the hands of the Church as represented by the popes and the high ecclesiastical dignitaries. This tendency received great impetus from the remarkable administrative talents of Leo the Great and Gregory the Great, and the Roman hierarchy has never since their time been willing to loosen its hold upon the temporal and worldly advantage thus gained. The result was a distinct loss to the spiritual life of the

Church and the diminution of the influence of such preaching as was still found within her borders. Thus limited and subordinated, preaching "was shorn of its aggressive power," ceased to be a constant custom and for many centuries became rare and exceptional.

It is noteworthy and surprising that it was during the Middle Ages, or the so-called "Dark Ages," the centuries from the eleventh to the fifteenth, that there came a measurable revival of preaching which was destined to culminate in the preaching of the Reformation and then of our own day. There were, however, three impelling conditions to this revival, namely, the now evident ignorance of the people which could no longer be overlooked, the Crusades and the increase of reforming and heretical movements within the Roman Church. Speaking of the neglect of preaching and religious instruction in this period, one historian says (Broadus, Page 94): "Over wide districts and through long years at a time, there would be almost no preaching. When men assembled in churches it was only to witness ceremonies and hear chanting and intoning. If sermons were given, it was in many countries still the custom to preach only in Latin, which the people did not now understand, even in southern Europe. Those who preached in the vernacular would often give nothing but eulogies on the saints, accounts of current miracles, etc. Most of the lower clergy were grossly ignorant, and many of them grossly irreligious, while the

bishops and other dignitaries were often engrossed with political administration or maneuvering, perhaps busy in war, if not occupied with pursuits still more unclerical and unchristian."

It was under these conditions that the revival of Christian preaching began in the Middle Ages. The first impulse, however, was provided by the Crusades when Europe began to realize the extraordinary growth of Moslem power, and as pilgrims to the Holy Land and Jerusalem began to bring back stories of the oppressions and cruelties of the Mohammedans towards Christians. The Crusades were the response to a mighty religious impulse throughout Europe, with the purpose of rescuing the holy places in Jerusalem from the possession of the Moslems and of securing the protection of Christian pilgrims. In consequence, the Crusades have been called "the moral purifiers of Europe," and such they were to this extent that they set in motion higher and nobler ideals and motives than those sordid motives and ideals which had so long dominated the rulers and peoples of Europe.

The first Crusade was undertaken under the preaching of Peter the Hermit, a remarkable man and a great preacher, distinguished by moral intensity and fiery enthusiasm. With great and rapid flow of words and powerful imagination he painted the profanation of the holy places and the blood of Christians flowing in the streets of Jerusalem. He was genuinely eloquent and very dramatic,

showing the crucifix to his audiences and beating his breast even to the wounding of his flesh. It is not surprising then to be told that the effects upon his hearers were remarkable and that they crowded to form that ill-starred army of the first Crusade.

There was another great "Crusading Evangelist," Bernard of Clairvaux, who lived from A. D. 1091 to 1153. He was a monk, learned and deeply pious and devoted to the Church, a man also with a statesmanlike vision, a really greater man than Peter the Hermit. Bernard was not a profound theologian like Augustine or Aquinas, but his sermons are carefully prepared, strong, devout, noble in spirit, often mystical, while his style is at once elegant and natural, simple and impressive. His powers of persuasion were irresistible and swayed popes and sovereigns. His greatest powers as a preacher were manifested when he preached the second crusade in 1145 and 1146. When the news of the fall of Edessa and that of other disasters in the Holy Land arrived, Bernard's whole soul was aroused for the stirring of all Europe for a new crusade. He went everywhere preaching with fiery eloquence in cities and towns, in the market places and the highways. At Vezelay, at Easter, he ascended a rough platform of wood surrounded by a vast multitude and delivered one of his characteristic sermons, at the close of which the multitude broke out in tumultuous cries, "The Cross, The Cross!" Bernard distributed his stock of the

holy badge and when his supply gave out he "tore up his own dress to satisfy the eager claimants." Two monarchs, Louis VII, of France, and Conrad of Germany, led the crusade; but it was to end in bitter disaster, to the great grief of Bernard. A few years later he died, but with the distinction of having been one of the two greatest preachers of Latin Christianity, the other being Augustine.

As we have already seen, sacerdotal Christianity had withdrawn the clergy from their proper office of preaching and the people were very ignorant. As Dean Milman says (*History of Latin Christianity*, Vol. 5, P. 230), "In general, actual preaching had fallen into disuse; it was in theory the special privilege of the bishops, and the bishops were but few who had either the gift, the inclination, or the leisure from their secular, judicial, or warlike occupations to preach even in their cathedral cities. The only general teaching of the people was the ritual." Under these conditions new intellectual and spiritual movements began to appear in the latter half of the twelfth century and the opening of the thirteenth. These were largely heretical but among them arose the movement headed by Peter Waldo, who once more preached a purer Gospel. He sent out his evangelists, known as the "Poor Men of Lyons," many of whom were able preachers, and at once they secured a wide hearing among the hungry people. This was a case where the common people heard them gladly. But the leaders of the Roman Church were quick to see

that these movements really threatened the whole hierarchical system which had arisen through the centuries.

Here then was the moving impulse which resulted in the founding of two new monastic orders in the early part of the thirteenth century, the mendicant orders of Dominicans and Franciscans. Dominic, a Spaniard, was the founder of the former order, being himself a strong preacher of compelling eloquence. The Dominican order was established especially for the purpose of combating the heretics and particularly the Waldensians. In a few years' time the active and zealous Dominicans possessed four hundred and seventy monasteries in every country in Europe, while these mendicant friars or traveling preachers, numbering upwards of twenty thousand, preached the old Roman faith from "the sierras of Spain to the steppes of Russia, from the Tiber to the Thames," in all its mediæval and inflexible rigor.

The Franciscans were founded by St. Francis of Assisi, an Italian, richly endowed with the fervor of mystic devotion, and increased as rapidly as did the Dominicans. Their work was largely a foreign mission work among the Mohammedans in Spain, Africa and the East, although they had many zealous and able preachers at home. Later, they followed the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese navigators and explorers, carrying and planting the Christian religion everywhere.

There were two outstanding preachers of this age, the first being Antony of Padua, a Franciscan and a Portuguese. He preached both in Africa and Italy and is said to have been the most popular preacher that ever lived. He preached often to twenty thousand people and sometimes to as many as thirty thousand, while the hearers would be so moved by his appeals that they made bonfires of their playing cards and other evidences of worldly pleasure and sin. His morals were enriched by illustrations but much marred by his wild allegorizing. It is claimed that he was the first preacher to make an orderly division of his sermon into several heads, after the form of our modern sermons.

The second great preacher of this period was Thomas Aquinas, an Italian and a Dominican. He is by "common consent regarded as the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, and one of the greatest minds in the history of philosophy." It is remarkable that he was also a popular preacher very acceptable to the common people. His sermons are clear, simple and practical, often following the expository method.

From this period to the Reformation there appeared many able preachers, among them being the mystic Tauler, John Wiclif, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, and the famous Italian Dominican monk, Savonarola, whose eloquence so captivated the city of Florence, all fore-runners of the Reformation. Gerson was another preacher of power whom Luther held in high esteem.

THE PREACHERS OF THE REFORMATION

The Reformation of the sixteenth century, to which we now come, was not only a revival of evangelical truth but also a great revival of preaching. As we have seen, there had been preaching during the centuries immediately preceding and some good preaching, but the local and settled clergy neglected it entirely, leaving the public teaching of religion to the thousands of mendicant friars. Necessarily, under such circumstances, the work of the traveling preachers was incomplete and insufficient although often worthy of honor, and the people remained comparatively uninstructed. The immediate effect of the Reformation, wherever it spread, was a "great outburst of preaching, such as had not been seen since the early Christian centuries." Evangelical pastors universally were preachers and they quickly became marked as educated and trained men, as differentiated from the Roman clergy, most of whom were but little less ignorant than their people.

The preaching of the Reformers and the evangelical pastors may be characterized in general as thoroughly Scriptural, usually doctrinal and often controversial as was necessary in those times. It was usually expository in form, seeking to bring a simple and direct exegesis of the Scripture, practically applied. The sermonic products of the Romanist preachers preceding and during the Reformation were very different. Their sermons were neither Biblical nor expository, neither spir-

itual nor practical, but instead they were appeals to the authority of the church fathers and traditions, the decrees of church councils and decisions of popes. They were often mere harangues, frequently trivial and dealing with puerilities, lacking the vital element which makes a discourse a real sermon. But the sermons of the Reformers were distinctively Biblical, expository, direct and practical, presenting the great doctrines of God, His nature and sovereignty; of Christ, His person and redeeming work; of sin and grace, of justification by faith and the sacraments, etc.; withal, appealing to both intellect and conscience.

Of the Reformation preachers on the Continent, the greatest were Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. Luther and Calvin, especially, were genuinely great preachers. A great preacher has been defined as being more than a "mere artist or a feeble suppliant," but "he is a conquering soul, a monarch, a born ruler of mankind." To this characterization, Luther and Calvin answer. They were both great preachers, but widely differing and with marked contrasts. However, they also had much in common, for they were both men of piety and great faith, characterized by commanding intellect and force of character, and possessed of abounding energy and masterful wills before which men perforce must bow; all of which appeared as determining factors in their preaching. The differences were equally marked.

Luther was not only the scholar and intellectual giant, but was also "rich in sensibility, imagination and swelling passion," abounding in humor and "delighting in music, in children, in the inferior animals," and with a poetic element in his nature. All of these, his intellectual power, his sensibility, his imagination, his passion for truth, entered into his sermons, which were marked by earnestness and vigor, sometimes by extravagant utterance and occasionally by a coarseness of language which was a reflection of the common practice of the times. But there were always evident a transparent sincerity and an intensity of conviction which, with his personality, made his preaching tremendously effective in moving great audiences.

The most striking illustration of Luther's remarkable powers as a preacher is to be found on the occasion of his return from the Wartburg and his discomfiture of the revolutionary Zwickau prophets. While Luther was kept for safety for a time in the seclusion of the Wartburg Castle after the Diet at Worms, Carlstadt and then the so-called "Zwickau prophets" were engaged in undoing the conservative and constructive reforming work of Luther by their wild vagaries, the products of their inward mysticism and destructive radicalism. The consequence was that the masses of the people in Wittenberg were swept from their moorings for a while by the excitement raised by the radical leaders. It made a real crisis in which the work of the Reformation was seriously imperilled. As Luther received re-

ports from time to time of what was going on in Wittenberg, he was greatly concerned and then alarmed and finally insisted upon leaving the Wartburg and returning to Wittenberg to avert the impending disaster. This he did in March, 1522.

The Sunday after his arrival, Luther appeared once more before a great congregation of Wittenberg citizens and students and entered his old pulpit. For eight days in succession he preached, delivering one sermon each day, and carrying the audiences with him by his irresistible logic and eloquence. As a result order was restored in Wittenberg, Carlstadt and the Zwickau prophets retired and the peril was averted. Of these sermons Dr. Philip Schaff says (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 6; page 388): "They are models of effective popular eloquence, and among the best he ever preached. He handled the subject from the standpoint of a pastor, with fine tact and practical wisdom. . . . Not one unkind word, not one unpleasant allusion, escaped his lips. In plain, strong scriptural language, he refuted the errors without naming the errorists. . . . Eloquence rarely achieved a more complete and honorable triumph. It was not the eloquence of passion and violence, but the eloquence of wisdom and love." Dr. Schaff adds further, "Wittenberg was a small place; but what he (Luther) said and did there, and what Calvin did afterwards in Geneva, had the significance of a world-historical fact, more influential at that time than an encyclical from Rome."

Many of Luther's sermons have been brought within the reach of the student and the pastor, within recent years, and a careful study of them will be well worth while. Their fidelity to the Word of God, their strict adherence to the text of the lesson under discussion, their careful exegesis, their plain applications to the everyday Christian life mark them as quite different from the popular sermons of our day but as truly evangelical and edifying.

John Calvin, too, was a great preacher although very different from Luther. It has been said of Calvin that he was "all intellect and will," and indeed he appears as the finest type of the intellectual preacher. He lacked entirely the warm imagination and friendly humor which were so pronounced in Luther, but made his writings and sermons powerful by the sheer force of his logic and clear-cut reasoning. Yet, with all his profound reasoning, his sermons were direct and simple in expression, marked also by a wide command of language. Calvin was not only a great and prolific commentator but he was also a great and prolific sermonizer, often, while laboring at his extensive commentaries and teaching hundreds of students at Geneva, preaching every day in addition. It is not surprising that his influence was wide and permanent.

Zwingli (1484-1531), from whose labors the Reformed Church sprang, was also an able preacher, bringing much scholarship and laborious study into

the making of his sermons. Zwingli was emotional and could put much feeling and eloquence into his sermonic productions, while he was at the same time energetic and forceful. There were many other strong and able preachers among the Reformers and the pastors of that and the succeeding generation, among them Farel, the friend of Calvin, who is said to have had "a blazing French eloquence," and John Knox, the great leader of the Reformation in Scotland. It is rather remarkable that Melancthon, so closely associated with Luther, did but little preaching.

The Lutheran Church in Germany has always continued to be a church of strong and able preachers of the Gospel, and from time to time really great preachers have arisen. In the seventeenth century there were such commanding figures as Paul Gerhardt, Philip Jacob Spener and August Herman Francke, all of them attempting to stem the tide of the religious indifference of the time, Francke's work extending over into the eighteenth century. Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the new Moravian Church, and Charles Henry von Bogatzky belong to the eighteenth century, while Claus Harms and Schleiermacher stand out conspicuously at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

THE FRENCH PULPIT

We wish now to consider, with a brevity which is necessary, the golden age of French preaching, which reached its splendid zenith in the latter half

of the seventeenth century. From the beginning of the Reformation the French Protestant pulpit had been distinguished by many able men, possessed of real power and literary merit, some of them indeed brilliant preachers. Among these were DuMoulin (1568-1658), Faucheur (1585-1657), Mestrezat (1592-1657) and Daille (1594-1670), all of whom lived before the time of Bossuet and who were popular preachers as well as conspicuously able men. More nearly coinciding with the era of brilliant Catholic preachers were Claude (1619-1687), Du Bosc (1623-1692) and Saurin (1677-1730).

The most famous of these latter was Claude, carefully educated and whose sermons are marked by purity of style and sometimes by the characteristic French energy. Of Du Bosc it is related that he appeared before the king, Louis XIV, to plead for the rights of the Protestants, and that the king after hearing him, went into the queen's chamber and remarked, "Madame, I have just listened to the best speaker in my kingdom." Then turning to his courtiers he said, "It is certain that I never heard any one speak so well." And yet he had often heard Bossuet. Of Saurin it is said that he was "a true orator," imaginative, possessing a good person and voice, while his sermons often "swelled into passionate earnestness."

For several centuries previous to this time, the French Catholic Church had produced but few preachers, but now without a doubt it was the popular Protestant preaching which stimulated the

Catholic Church to a revival of preaching, in self-defence. As the result the Gallican Church reached its highest pulpit glory in that brilliant group of genuinely able preachers, Bossuet (1627-1704), Bourdaloue (1632-1704), Massillon (1663-1742) and Fenelon (1651-1715), the first three being the greatest.

Bossuet possessed an eloquence marked by "chastened splendor" in imagery and diction while he was exceedingly apt in Scripture quotation. Prof. Saunders says of him: "He had a genius for form. The French language was never better used. . . . His fame as preacher first came from his funeral orations for the queen of Charles First of England, the daughter of the Duchess of Orleans, and for Prince Conde. He was the preacher for special occasions. But his life was devoted to teaching his own churches. He was above all a doctrinal preacher. He did not analyze character and lay bare the ugliness of individual sins as did Bourdaloue, nor persuade through beauty of form and sentiment as did Massillon. . . He studied, he served, he believed, he was full of his subject, and he spoke as he believed."

Bourdaloue is by many considered the greatest preacher the Gallican Church ever produced and indeed the greatest of all French preachers of whatever creed. Perhaps not equalling Massillon in brilliancy, he was marked by profundity of thought and unusual forcefulness in argument. He is especially judged a model in treating moral subjects.

"He analyzes the topic with conspicuous ability, and depicts with a master hand the beauty of virtuous living and the terrible nature and consequences of vice." Often he made Paris shudder and dared to say the most pointed things to the king.

Massillon was a preacher of an entirely different type. He was learned, eloquent, a devoted Catholic as were Bossuet and Bourdaloue, but he was possessed of a singular brilliancy of style, easy and flowing, while he had an unusual power of exciting the emotions. He had a facile command of language and of his subject. He also had the facility in making quick turns of thought which are always so impressive. For example, there is the well-known utterance when preaching before King Louis XIV, on the text, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Massillon began by saying: "If the world addressed your majesty from this place, the world would not say, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' but 'Blessed is the prince who has never fought but to conquer; who has filled the universe with his name; who, through the whole course of a long and flourishing reign, enjoys in splendor all that men admire—extent of conquest, the esteem of his enemies, the love of his people, the wisdom of his laws.' But, sire, the language of the Gospel is not the language of the world."

From the time of this brilliant group of preachers, preaching rapidly declined in the French pulpit, but again in the nineteenth century there appeared in the French Protestant communions a suc-

cession of able and eloquent preachers, such as Vinet, D'Aubigne, Cæsar Malan, Adolphe Monod, "a man of rare eloquence," and later, Theodore Monod. The French Catholic Church also experienced another revival of preaching led by such men as Lacordaire, Father Felix and the widely known Father Hyacinthe.

It may be said of the French pulpit that its occupants seem to have sought literary elegance and perfection of art, laying superior emphasis upon the form of the discourse, while in the German, English and American preaching the spiritual element and the practical appeal are much more apparent. The former awakens our admiration but the latter moves to action in faith and service.

ENGLISH PREACHERS

England, Scotland and America have been not a whit behind the churches of the continent in giving to the world great preachers of the everlasting Gospel. There were Latimer and John Knox, upon whom the eulogium was pronounced by the Regent Murray, "There lies he who never feared the face of man," then Hooper, Andrews and Hall. Contemporaneous with the great French preachers were Baxter, Owen, Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, Flavel, Bunyan, Howe, South, Barrow and the distinguished Archbishop Tillotson. The latter was considered the greatest preacher of his time, certainly of the English pulpit at least. He was kindly in spirit, spiritual in his message, simple and

clear in his style, but vigorous and learned. His sermons well deserve study.

The Puritan preachers of that day were rugged men, often stern in spirit but fearless and able in giving out the whole Gospel. Other great preachers followed, Atterbury, Doddridge, and in America, Jonathan Edwards of the same type, who has been judged "as the foremost preacher of the age, one of the very noblest in all history for intellect, imagination, and passion, for true and high eloquence." (Broadus). In this same period in America, we mention Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the founder of the Lutheran Church in this country, a preacher of tremendous force of character, untiring energy and zeal, of deep spiritual insight, and a rare command of Biblical learning, one whose impress has been stamped upon the Church which he organized unto this day. In England at the same time appeared John Wesley and George Whitefield, both great preachers, popular in the best sense, but differing widely. The sermons of both will repay careful study.

Passing over the last century and bringing our historical review to a close, we wish to make three brief observations which we draw from this survey: (1) There has been but little change in the essential content of preaching from the early days of Christianity to the present; (2) There has been a great change in the form of the sermon and in the method of preaching, from the homily of the early days to the carefully and logically ordered

sermons of the last two or three centuries; (3) It is noteworthy that every great revival of preaching has been accompanied by a great religious awakening, or *vice versa*. When religious coldness and spiritual declension have prevailed in the Church, the voice of the preacher has not been heard at all or at best has not carried far. When there have been able, earnest and spiritual preachers of the Gospel and salvation, then the Church has been aroused, alert to fulfill her appointed mission and pulsing with spiritual life and power, as she has faithfully proclaimed Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Therefore, let the Christian Church today cherish and cultivate the fine art of Christian preaching, for it is a part of her life. Let her sons who hear the call of God to the ministry as their life work, seek the most thorough learning and equipment that they may maintain the best traditions of the fathers and give forth the Gospel message today as true preachers and prophets of the Lord Jesus Christ.

LECTURE II.

THE PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF PREACHING

In our first lecture we gave our consideration to the place of Christian preaching in the history and life of the Church, bringing our survey, necessarily brief, down to about a century ago. Today, the preaching of the Gospel continues to hold an important place in the life of the Church and is a vital contributing factor to her spiritual influence and power. In the last two generations there have been many great preachers in all Protestant countries. Here in America there have been numerous outstanding pulpit personalities such as Beecher, Richard S. Storrs, Talmadge, John Hall, Phillips Brooks, Joseph Seiss, Theodore Cuyler, and others whose influence has been far-reaching. In spite of the radical social changes by reason of which the Christian preacher experiences a greater and more serious competition than ever in the past, in endeavoring to secure a hearing from the people, preaching is still an essential element of the Church's life.

This observation leads us to turn aside for a few moments to the consideration of the relationship of preaching to worship which consideration will be preparatory to the study of the subject before us. It should be borne in mind that the Church has two

functions, the function of worship and that of teaching, the latter chiefly in the form of preaching. Both of these functions are necessary in the life of the Church and neither can be omitted or belittled without distinct loss of power. Religion always seeks to give expression to itself and this it does primarily in worship. It is inconceivable that Christian believers, filled with a glowing love and a confident faith toward their Lord, should ever consent to be silent; they must give voice to their love and convictions in praise and prayer and witness-bearing.

These two functions must be properly related, they must be regarded as equal, and neither should be exalted at the expense of the other. If the Church worships, she must also preach; and if the Church preaches, she must also worship. Last year much discussion was aroused throughout religious circles in America by a thoughtful article, entitled "The Menace of the Sermon," appearing in the *Yale Review* and written by Rev. Dr. Francis E. Clark. Under this rather startling caption, the author calls attention to a great weakness among Protestants, that which he calls "sermon idolatry," the over emphasis upon the sermon, along with the failure of the average Protestant to appreciate fully the need of worship, and upon which he lays the blame for the prevalent scant church attendance. As stated in an editorial in *The Lutheran*, "If Greek and Roman Catholics are drawn to the House of God to unite in the worship of God without the

drawing power of a sermon, why should Protestants feel the need of it any the less? Because they do not, and because they depend entirely on the attractive power of the sermon to bring them to the House of God, churches generally are half empty and great masses of so-called Protestants are found outside the Church rather than in it. The lust for pleasure on Sunday would cease to dominate the life if the sense of the need of worship had been instilled."

The point is well taken. While the Roman Catholic Church over-emphasizes the function of worship, most of the Protestant churches underestimate the value and place of worship and exalt preaching at the expense of the former. Consequently the majority of the people have been trained to go to church chiefly to hear rather than to worship. They ask where they can hear the best preacher and the most entertaining sermon, and if some announced subjects can make a stronger appeal than the Sunday paper or Sunday motoring, then perhaps they may go to church. Many pastors are themselves to blame for this, for they make the public appeal either from the pulpit or by the pages of the newspaper, for the people to come to hear what they may say in their sermons, and the appeal is often palpably made to the motive of curiosity, rather than to higher and nobler incentives. It is noteworthy that one seldom hears the appeal made to the people to come to church to worship God and that the public service is usually

spoken of as "the preaching service" instead of the service of worship.

This habit of Protestants is indeed a serious weakness and a great mistake. Not that the sermon should be depreciated, but that preaching should be rightly co-ordinated with the worship of God, as an integral part thereof, holding the central place while the people are taught the sacred privilege of spiritual worship. "What Protestantism needs is not less preaching but more preaching of the right kind."

One author (Van Oosterzee, *Practical Theology*, pages 183-4), says: "In regarding preaching as a part of that organic whole which is indicated by the name of Christian worship, we do not by any means intend to assert that no social religious service is conceivable without preaching. We may assemble too for united prayer and song, perhaps alternately with the reading of appropriate portions of Scripture: witness so many a beautiful religious exercise in the Protestant Churches. . . . Yet the gathering together devoted exclusively to the last-named object would hardly succeed in satisfying for a continuance the whole man, and certainly not correspond to the ideal of a complete service. For all exercise of fellowship is reciprocal in its nature; and only then is the House of the Lord a Bethel, when not only man has drawn nigh to God, but God has drawn nigh to man. Man draws nigh to God with the song of praise, the incense of adoration, and the offering of love; and God on His

part draws nigh to man with the word of testimony and the tokens of His grace. Only teaching and worship combined form that whole of the religious exercise which is conducted by the leader. . . While prayer and song are to be offered up on the part of the congregation, the word of preaching is brought to the congregation; in the former it is itself active, in the other it receives and hears what the spirit speaks to it." Thus preaching occupies its own definite, independent and yet integral place in the Church's worship.

I. THE PURPOSE OR AIM OF PREACHING

In view of the foregoing, we are now ready to consider the purpose or aim of Christian preaching. If preaching is the primary action of the teaching function of the Church, and if it holds the place in Christian worship indicated above, then naturally and necessarily we ask the question, 'What is the purpose of preaching?' This is an important question, in answering which we need to have clear views. It is also plain that preaching must have a definite spiritual aim, otherwise it is useless and a mere empty form as far as the Kingdom of God is concerned.

At the very threshold of our discussion, another inquiry confronts us: Has there been any essential change in the purpose of preaching from the time of the apostles to the present? The inquiry arises from the persistent emphasis which is being laid upon the principle of change as the law of progress.

It is true that the law of change is always active in the natural world and in the realm of intellectual investigation. There have been many great and useful discoveries while the thinking and the viewpoints of man are constantly changing. There has been wonderful advance in general knowledge and in the formulated conclusions of the sciences. The social order is undergoing great and revolutionary changes, reflected in the varying economic and political conditions of the day. Likewise there are changes in the realm of religion, in religious beliefs, in moral convictions, in life and practice, in our apprehension of Christian duty and of doctrine. It is therefore assumed by some that there is likewise a change in the object of preaching as compared with the past. From this view we dissent.

It should be kept clearly in mind that the action of the law of change is contingent upon stable and permanent foundations. Otherwise, there can be no productive change making for constructive progress either in the natural, economic, moral or spiritual worlds. Some things must absolutely remain stable in order that there may be orderly development towards higher levels and definite achievements in all realms. All about us there are certain great, stable laws, which are operating unchangeably just as they did ages ago. There is the law of gravitation which is the same as it was ten thousand years ago, holding the stars steadily in their places. The law of the conservation of energy has not changed. The laws of light, of heat, of sound, of

the mysterious electric force are unchangeable, only man has found out what some of them are and how he may use them to his advantage. The human mind, in its essential powers and capacities is not different today from what it was in the day when the Egyptian Pharaohs built the pyramids and developed their civilization and when Moses received the matchless law of Jehovah and gave it to the people of Israel.

Another consideration,—our commonest actions are unchanged. The functions of the human body are exactly the same as when man was created by the fiat of Almighty God. The object of eating food has not changed in all human history. We eat our bread today for the same reason that the Israelites ate the manna in the wilderness, for the preservation of our lives and the maintenance of our physical and intellectual powers. There has been no change, for here we deal with things fundamental and stable.

Neither has there been any change in the fundamental truths and realities of religion. In our time the object of eating the bread of life is just the same as it was in the days of the apostles. Its object is life. Has the object of preaching changed then along with all the superficial changes of history and scientific discovery? To this we answer, No. Preaching deals with certain stable principles, which are permanent and fundamental in the spiritual realm of religion. There are these great and unchangeable realities, God, Christ, the Kingdom,

immortality, eternity, redemption, the inspired Word. Men may change in their apprehension of them, but they do not change in themselves. God is the same yesterday, today and forever; He is the "I am." Jesus Christ is ever the Son of God, incarnate. Christian preaching deals with the greatest realities in the universe, realities which change not because they are the eternally stable foundations of life and destiny.

Therefore, the object of Christian preaching has not changed since the days when the apostles carried the Gospel far and wide in the world which they knew and in which they lived. The Gospel of yesterday, so far as it touches the fundamentals of the faith, must be the Gospel of today.

Let us ask now more specifically the purpose of the preaching of Christ and the apostles. In a single word, it was evangelization—the proclamation of the good news, the glad tidings of salvation, in order to win souls for Christ and His Kingdom. Jesus declared of Himself, John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He affirmed again, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10). He preached repentance, faith in God, regeneration; He sought to lead men into His Kingdom that they might be saved from their sins, from the guilt of sin and its consequences.

Likewise, the aim of the apostles was the salvation of sinners, evangelization. On the day of Pentecost, Peter appealed to his great audience, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." After that, wherever the apostles went, they pointed men to Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, as the only Saviour, and sought to win souls to believe and be saved. However, it should be noted that the evangelistic preaching of the apostles was two-fold in its aim: first, its object was the salvation of sinners; second, the edification of Christian believers, their building up in the faith and in Christian life and character.

It was not enough that men should be won from the bondage and power of sin and death, but they must also grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and so the preaching and the writing of the apostles always aim at the firm establishment of new believers upon the solid rock of Christ and of the Gospel. They aim to instruct and to show them how they may grow in holy lives and character, until the likeness of Christ may be formed in them. The salvation of souls on the one hand, the building up of the Church in the life of faith and service on the other hand—these were the objects of the preaching of the early Christian Church.

Therefore, the object of Christian preaching to-day must be the same, if our contention is true that the great underlying purpose of Christian preach-

ing cannot change essentially from what it was in the first century of the Church's life. In our time, the Christian preacher must stand in his pulpit for the purpose of evangelization, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ for (1) the salvation of souls; and (2) the edification of believers.

This means that, in general, the purpose of preaching must be to promote the cause of religion, the Christian religion. The preacher must concern himself primarily with individual souls, to win and fit them for Christ and His Kingdom, both for this present life and that of the world to come.

However, much present-day teaching does not agree with the conclusions which we have stated. Some conceive of preaching as possessing a very different purpose from that which we have indicated. Of these, some quietly ignore entirely evangelization unto salvation but make ethical culture the primary aim of all public appeals and instruction given under the name of religion. Religion is conceived of as morals applied to conduct and life. Others hold that social reform should embody the main purpose of all preaching and that the so-called "social Gospel" should supersede the evangelistic gospel (if we may be permitted to use such a phrase) in the exercise of the Church's teaching function. The moral transformation of society in the large is considered as greater than the spiritual regeneration of the individual. These and similar views are not supported by the plain teachings and implications of the Scriptures or by the

deeper needs of mankind, and we cannot accept them. We hold that the Church is here, primarily, to evangelize.

II. THE CONTENT OF THE SERMON

We come now to consider the content of preaching and of the sermon. That content is, using general terms, the Christian religion, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It may be well for us at this point to inquire, What is religion? As religion is the most potent factor in both the determination of the eternal destiny of man and the development of human society, clear ideas are needed. And yet, right here, when we come to formulate the true conception of religion, we find much confusion in the popular thinking and such hazy notions, usually inadequate and often mistaken, in the expressed idea of religion.

One man says, "My religion is the Golden Rule. That is enough for me." Another says, "My religion is to do all the good I can for my fellow-men." Another declares: "My religion is to be honest and square in all my dealings. I have no need of creeds and doctrines and churches." Still another says, "My religion is just to live right." Each thinks he has said a good thing and the public is often much impressed, but all have missed the mark and given a narrow and superficial definition of religion. Religion in its finer meaning, goes deeper. It is not to be confounded with the fruits of religion or limited to certain forms of moral

conduct; nor is it merely an external form or a series of outward acts.

Religion, in its essential idea, is something spiritual, something which touches vitally the inward life of man and which concerns his relation to God. Martensen says (Dogmatic Theology, page 5): "Religion is a sense of God's existence, and of man's relation to God—or more accurately described, man's consciousness of communion with God, of his union with God." . . . This relation is "a relation of existence, a relation of personal life and being to God. We may, therefore, say that religion, in the true sense of the word, is a *life* in God." It is a conscious, holy relation of fellowship with God.

Principal Fairbairn has defined religion as "the regulation of life through the great idea of God." In the Christian religion resides the power to "make bad men good." The initial power is the power of an idea, the idea of God. What a man thinks and believes as to God creates his character. In the light of this truth we say that religion is spiritual and inward as a personal, conscious relation of man to God, an intimate fellowship with Him, not the pomp of external power or forms, but a power of inward life working out in holy character and finding expression in Christian worship and Christian conduct.

It is in the light of this conception of true religion that we affirm that the content of preaching must be the Christian religion, the Gospel of Jesus

Christ. It follows therefore, that the Christian minister is expected to preach that Gospel message which will help bring sinners to repentance and lead them into saving fellowship with God through Christ, the Saviour, and lead believers into vital Christian faith and life. He will preach essentially the same Gospel of salvation which the apostles proclaimed in the first century. This is still a world of sin and its needs are not different from those of the same world in that earlier day. The changed conditions of the present may require an adaptation of the Gospel to meet the altered viewpoints of mankind and may necessitate changes in the Gospel's application to conduct and life, but the Gospel of the first century is still the Gospel for the twentieth century and the essential content and subject matter of preaching are unchanged.

Let us now consider the subject-content of preaching more specifically.

(1) The primary materials of sermons are derived from the revelation of God in the sacred Scriptures. "The Bible is the great store-house of materials for sermons." From its treasures the minister must gather those riches of truth which he is to convey to those who wait upon his ministrations and listen to the message he brings. The inspired Word of God is the very first source of material for the Christian sermon.

The preacher, that he may be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" and that he may handle "aright the word of truth," must, quoting Prof.

Fisk (Manual of Preaching, page 301), "give himself to the study of the Scriptures with an assiduity and a persistency that shall know no weariness, and shall continue during life. He must daily study the Word of God with all the helps at his command, addressing himself to the work of mastering its profound doctrines and mysteries, until the whole system of divine truth shall stand luminous before him. To this end he must make this book the one great study of his life. Every other study must be made subordinate to this. On the truths of the divine word he must meditate day and night, giving himself wholly to them that this profiting may appear to all." For these truths, faithfully, prayerfully and intelligently sought through the exposition of the Scriptures, are the substance of the message which he is to bring to his people.

We wish to emphasize strongly our contention that the preacher cannot depart from the Bible as the primary source of authority and truth in religion. He has not been called by the Holy Spirit to preach science, literature or social reform, but religion,—the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. The temptation, however, is often strong to wander far afield and seek materials for preaching from other and secular sources. Melancthon, in his Apology to the Augsburg Confession, relates, "I myself knew a great preacher, who was entirely silent about Christ and the Gospel, and preached the Ethics of Aristotle. Another spoke of the life of the Lord, but as the travels of Ulysses. For

that which was wanting as regards the contents, they sought as much as possible to make amends by a beautiful, or rather piquant form." There are today many preachers like those to whom Melanchthon referred, but duty to Christ and our high calling requires that we be loyal to the Bible as the basis of the Christian message. The Reformation affirmed the principle that the Word of God is the one supreme rule or authority in Christian life and practice. This we must preach.

It should also be borne in mind that while we preach to the cultured and educated, we minister most largely to the people in general and that for them the Bible alone is calculated to provide that spiritual bread which they want and need. A distinguished preacher has said: "It is very well as a general principle that we should preach with some reference to the wants of the highly cultivated, and should deal in profound thought, but after all it is the plain truths of Scripture that do the chief good, to cultivated as well as uncultivated. One who begins to regard himself as distinctively a preacher for the intellectual or the learned, will spoil his preaching as rapidly as possible."—(Broadus).

(2) Preaching should contain the orderly presentation of Christian doctrine. The historian, Mosheim, once remarked, "Luther taught us *what* to preach, and Melanchthon *how* to preach." If Luther did indeed teach us what to preach; he certainly taught pastors to preach doctrine, for his

greatest powers were manifested in the presentation of the leading doctrines of the evangelical faith.

The Reformation was a great religious awakening, and because it was such, it was marked also by a decided revival of doctrinal preaching. This sixteenth century movement necessarily brought to the front the controversial discussion of the central teachings of the Christian faith, and, in consequence, the sermons of the Reformers were largely doctrinal. Every important religious awakening has been marked by the increased doctrinal content of the sermonic production. The preaching of the Pietistic movement in Germany, the Puritan movement and the Wesleyan-Methodist movement in England and America, was decidedly doctrinal in character.

Within the last generation or two, there has arisen an insistent demand for more so-called "practical" or "up-to-date" sermons, as distinguished from doctrinal sermons, the form of the demand tending to disparage the latter as unpractical and to imply that the preaching of doctrine failed to interest and win the people. Too many have yielded to this demand and have been preaching secular themes and negations, which do not feed or satisfy the soul. As a result of their falseness, souls starve. Let the minister preach the great affirmations of the Christian religion; let him preach the authority of the Gospel of Christ. This, hungry souls need and want.

At the present time, however, it is quite noticeable that a healthy reaction has set in and that thoughtful laymen in the Church are asking for more doctrinal sermons while the teaching and explanation of Christian doctrine are becoming increasingly acceptable and popular. Indeed, the Church cannot do otherwise than preach doctrine, if she would be true to herself and her high commission. If she is to fulfill her teaching function then she must continue to proclaim without ceasing from all her pulpits the fundamental teachings of the Christian religion, the doctrine of the Triune God, the doctrine of the person of Christ, His incarnation, His redeeming work and atonement, His resurrection from the dead, the doctrines of the Holy Spirit, the Church, of sin, regeneration, justification by faith, the judgment, eternal life, and the like. These are at the heart of Christianity and must be preached.

And, after all, doctrinal sermons need not and ought not to be dull or uninteresting. The Christian doctrines can be presented clearly and simply and with a compelling interest, such that most people within and without the Church will welcome them. The average minister finds that, in the long run, his most acceptable sermons are those that deal with the serious subjects of the Gospel, touching God, Christ, salvation and eternal life. To this end also he should strive.

(3) The revelation of God in Nature and Providence. God stands revealed in the working of the

natural world, which is His creation, and in the working of His manifest providence throughout the course of human history. Such revelation of divine activity has a very proper place in pulpit discourse.

From the natural world may be gathered abundant materials which may be employed to illustrate and enforce the Gospel truth. Vinet declares, "Nature is an immense parable." Indeed, the world of nature furnishes a continuous picture-story which displays the creative power of God, His governing providence in its progress, His majesty, grace and love. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge," sang the Psalmist; "the whole earth is full of his glory." That great singer saw God enthroned in His earth and in His heavens. The book of nature and the inspired book of revelation are closely related and each one helps to interpret the other. The diligent student may here find exhaustless treasures with which he may enrich and impressively apply the preached truth.

The wide reaching field of history also furnishes rich treasures for the use of the Gospel preacher. Bear in mind that history is not merely an unordered record of disconnected and independently occurring events, but that it is a unified whole, whose slow but steady human currents, intellectual, moral, religious, political, economic, social, moving through the centuries, have been making for the development of civilization and the gradual uplifting and betterment of mankind. Through all these

movements and counter-currents, through all the overturnings of civilizations, the rise and fall of empires, the reverent student of history discerns the hand of God, His directive and determining providence, ever working with divine wisdom toward the ultimate good and the coming of His eternal kingdom. Here is material for sermons, material that ought to be in them.

In this connection, one writer remarks (Vinet, *Homiletics*, p. 88), "Besides sacred history, properly so called, there are abundant materials for preaching, in the history of the Church, in which the history of the Old and New Testaments has its continuation; in the history of religion, and even that of the world, which is, as it were, a history of Providence. What a field, too, is the history of missions and Christian labor, as also that of persecution? The history of individuals, biographies of holy men, ought also to have place in the pulpit. . . . These sermons give us all the interest which general truth acquires by being individualized." Therefore, we would add, he is a wise preacher who studies diligently the fields of general history, Church history and biography.

(4) The subject matter of Christian ethics also should form an integral part of the content of our preaching. So closely related is conduct to faith, and morals to religion, that the Christian minister cannot possibly omit the principles and applications of Christian ethics from his preaching. The teaching of moral principles abounds in the discourses

of Jesus and in those of the apostles. Indeed they are a part of our Christian religion.

Morality has been defined in the light of Christian faith, as "the doctrine of manners, or of practical life, considered in its relations to law and grace." (Vinet. *Id.* p. 80). The moral law of God, the moral precepts of Christ, the Christian life in all its varied relations to our fellow-men, the motives which move men to action, the building up of character, all these have a legitimate and necessary place in the sermon. The Christian life is so important as the fruit of a living faith, that it must be presented in all its bearings. The Gospel aims at life on the highest plane of holiness, character, unselfish service and brotherly love. Christian ethics must be preached therefore along with Christian doctrine,—and that, with applications, not only to individuals, but also to social, national, and international relationships.

While there is ever the danger that some may seek to substitute a religion of moral culture for the religion of redemption and divine grace, yet, in view of the wide-spread moral breakdown, only too evident in society at the present time, the Church must lay renewed and emphatic insistence upon the highest standards of righteousness and of public and private morals, throughout her preaching. The Church and society, because of the prevalent laxity, both need the moral bracing up and the quickening, purifying power which such preaching would give. The Church must ever preach

Christian morals as a component part of her message, thus following the example of her Lord and of the apostles.

We have thus far been speaking of those general classes of subjects and materials, which properly and necessarily form the major part of the content of preaching. It may be well to refer briefly to some of the subjects which should be excluded from the pulpit, or, at least, from a primary or conspicuous place in our preaching. It may be asserted that we should exclude from the pulpit "whatever does not tend to edification; that is, to form Christ within us — whatever an ordinary hearer cannot of himself convert into the bread of life; or at least, whatever in the preacher's own apprehension has not this character." Rev. Henry Ziegler, D.D., suggests this enumeration of classes of subjects to be excluded: (The Preacher. Page 74). (1) The metaphysical aspects of any subject. (2) Useless and doubtful speculations. (3) Ridiculous stories and amusing anecdotes. (4) Subjects which are purely secular or scientific.

As to the first class, philosophy and the history of philosophy are very important and attractive fields of study and investigation and may be very helpful in our study of theology, but they cannot be given the major place in preaching. The minister goes into his pulpit to preach religion, not philosophy. Besides, he who fills his sermons with philosophical discussions will preach over the heads of his congregation; only the few can secure any

advantage from such discourses. The preacher must preach for the many, to win them for Christ. He who makes philosophy prominent in his discourses, will lay himself open to the charge of pedantry, and probably justly. This will militate against effective preaching.

So far as the second class is concerned, it is plain that the preacher will get nowhere, who gives much of his time to the presentation of vague speculations and crude notions of his own, instead of the plain teachings of God's word. The modern incumbent of the prophetic office ought to come before his hearers with "Thus saith the Lord," as did the prophets of old. He is to declare the Gospel of salvation with the authority of God for the purpose of the cure of souls. Doubt and uncertain speculations cannot help the seeking soul to a firm footing upon the rock or to the full experience of fellowship with Christ.

When it comes to the matter of the use of humorous stories or amusing anecdotes in the pulpit, there is a difference of opinion. Some contend that wit and humor have a useful place in preaching to give point to the message, to brighten and to cheer, and to arrest the attention of the hearer so that the more serious lesson may be brought to him. These contentions are of doubtful validity. We admit that occasionally a touch of wit or of humor may serve a good purpose and that now and then there may be found a preacher who is skilfull enough to use them without detracting from his

real message. But such men are rare. As a rule it is difficult to use amusing incidents effectively for they usually distract the mind of the hearer, hold his attention and remain in his memory, while he misses the serious application. It is usually better to discard everything of this kind lest it detract from the preacher's usefulness. The reputation of being a teller of funny stories within or without the pulpit almost invariably hurts a minister's influence. He may gain a superficial applause, but people lose confidence in him.

The fourth class of excluded subjects includes those pertaining to politics, economics, science, literature, industrial questions, etc., which are very important to us as citizens but which have no primary place in preaching. They may be introduced with perfect propriety when they serve to illustrate or apply religious truth and when they possess definite and clear moral relationships. The Christian preacher's own field of religious truth is so vast, indeed inexhaustible, that he cannot afford to substitute themes from secular fields as his major subjects, especially as the people have such abundant opportunity to be well informed concerning them by the agency of the periodicals and books of the day.

With reference to these classes of material, let me make myself perfectly clear. It is the preacher's right, indeed his duty, to make use of such material from all these fields as may serve to illustrate his sermon and to make practical applications of the

truth. All these realms of truth may be made to serve the proclamation of the Gospel very effectively. The minister ought to read widely and make himself as well informed as his people, and more, in politics, international relations, economics, science, art, sociology, and particularly in history, literature and philosophy. In short, the minister ought to be an all-around educated and cultured man, with a working grasp of many branches of knowledge, drawing upon all to contribute to the interest, the power, the instruction and the persuasiveness of his preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

Our contention is this, that these classes of subjects cannot rightly be permitted to usurp the major place in the pastor's study and preaching and push the Gospel to the side, for above all else, he is here to search the Scriptures and to bring their message of the kingdom and of salvation to men. And yet the tendency in many liberal quarters today is in this very direction, displacing Gospel teaching with secular themes, while the claim is vigorously asserted that the pulpit should be an open forum for the discussion of any and all subjects that may pertain to the public interest or catch the popular ear.

Luther must have faced similar tendencies and aberrations in the preaching of the Reformation era, for it is said that he once complained sarcastically, "that the time was not distant when there would be preaching on blue ducks." Luther,

himself, was very strict in adhering closely to the Scriptures in all his preaching, and he had little patience with those who wandered about among all sorts of extraneous subjects. His own sermons were models of Scriptural exposition and direct application to Christian faith and life, and the ministry of today will make no mistake in following his practice. However, there seems to be considerable preaching on "blue ducks" in our time, if one may judge by the exceedingly wide range of sermon topics appearing in the press and by the very long list of special Sundays, which various patriotic and welfare organizations demand that the Church should observe with appropriate sermons.

This tendency to displace the Gospel is often seen. The writer was present at a Sunday evening union church service on one occasion, when a "liberal" minister was to preach the sermon. On being asked by the one presiding at the service what Scripture lesson he desired to have read, he answered that he had none and then insisted that no lesson should be read. A lesson, however, was read in spite of his objection. He then delivered an address, without a text and with scarcely a reference to the Christian religion. Referring to a pastor who was well known for his staunch loyalty to the Bible and the Gospel, it was remarked contemptuously, coming from another "liberal" preacher, "He doesn't preach from anything but the Bible." What was intended to disparage was instead a fine

compliment to the credit of the faithful preacher of the word.

It is this disposition to yield the privilege of the pulpit to anything and everything under the sun, under the guise of "broad-mindedness," or "up-to-dateness," to the disparagement of the preaching of the Gospel, as if it were a subject of minor importance to be given attention occasionally, to which we object. We claim the Christian pulpit for Christ and His Gospel. We frankly acknowledge that we are conservative in our theology and in our view of the Church's functions, and that we are old-fashioned in our conviction that the Christian pastor must continue to preach Christ and His cross as the supreme content of the message which he is called to deliver from his Lord to believers and the unsaved alike. Let everything else in the way of subject-matter be subordinate to this one great theme of all the ages and our own.

The story is told of a Spanish painter who employed his art to depict the "Last Supper." It was his object to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and countenance of the Master; but he put on the table in the foreground some chased cups, the workmanship of which was exceedingly beautiful, and when his friends came to see the picture, every one said, "What beautiful cups!" "Ah!" said he, "I have made a mistake; these cups divert the eyes of the spectator from the Master, to whom I wished to direct the attention of the observer," and he took his brush and rubbed them from the

canvas. He was determined that Christ should have first place and that nothing should divert attention from Him.

So we should give Christ the first place today in our preaching, for the world needs the Saviour. It needs the sturdy, insistent, believing re-affirmation of the religion of Jehovah, which the prophet beheld as including "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." It needs the re-affirmation of the great principles of the Gospel, righteousness, love to God and man, and saving faith in Christ. In this time of confusion in the world's life and thinking, when men everywhere are fearful and anxious, it is noteworthy that there is such unanimity in the expressed judgment of the world's most thoughtful leaders, like Mr. Lloyd George in the realm of world relations and Mr. Roger Babson in the realm of finance and business, that religion is the supreme need.

When Mr. Joseph Tumulty, one-time secretary to President Wilson, returned from an extended visit of observation in Europe, he declared earnestly, "Back to Christ and the ten commandments will alone save the world." The sin-sick world does not need shallow theories and quack remedies for the cure of her ills, but the faithful presentation of the plain Gospel of sin and salvation, — salvation through Christ and His cross.

We do not claim that you will fill your churches at once, if you preach the Gospel only, for it is a question if there is very much desire for spiritual

religion among men generally. There is widely prevalent a great craving for excitement, for abnormal experiences, and much of "a desire to make psychic adventures upon the divine," as a recent writer phrases it, and there may also be seen "a fine passion for service." But spiritual religion, with its discipline and self-denials for Christ's sake, with its emphasis upon the supernatural, with its call for the full consecration of our powers and for the practice of "that love of God which issues in the treading of self under foot," may and will repel many. Christ warned of this. But it will appeal to some and to increasing numbers, whose deeper longings and spiritual hunger will be met and satisfied by the riches of the blessed Gospel, which centers in our Lord. And it is such hungry souls that the Church is here to help and feed.

If the Church would be faithful to her high calling, then her ministers must continue to bring the true bread of life to the people and to preach Christ and the Word. Let me quote a paragraph from Prof. James M. Hoppin, D.D. (Pastoral Theology, page 326), "We think that the Christian ministry may continue to maintain a powerful and legitimately controlling influence over the popular mind in matters of religious faith and conscience, such as the New Testament gives them, if they will wield their authority aright; if they will set forth the truth simply and not themselves; if they will show that they are loyal and humble servants of their Master in life, spirit and doctrine,

and that they sincerely desire not to make a gain of godliness, but to do good to all men and to bring them to God. . . . Preaching should still continue to be what it was originally intended to be, for if it does not, it loses its power. It was instituted to build up the Kingdom of God in the world through the heralding of a form of truth divinely adapted to produce radical moral effects. The pulpit is an accepted basis of public address and of popular influence, and it may be easily wrested from its purpose or transformed into a scientific lecturer's desk, a philosopher's stand, a literary teacher's throne. . . . Let us have the true thing, or give it up entirely. Let us not turn it into something else, or perhaps a travesty."

These words apply today. Upon the young preachers of our time a great responsibility is being laid. They face the necessity of making the choice between the Modernist's new and attenuated gospel, spreading far afield over many realms, while the appeal of Christ to the soul is weakened if not entirely lost, and the old evangel which seeks to save lost souls, which brings faith and love and hope and cheer to men and women discouraged and cast down in life's conflicts and toils, and which holds up Christ and His Cross, without faltering, before a world of sin. Upon this choice the outcome of their ministry will depend. The young preachers, now going out to take their places in Christian pulpits, will be the leaders of the Church of tomorrow and will shape her thought and

theology and life. They, humanly speaking, have it to say whether or not the Church shall fulfill her Christ-appointed task of evangelization. We may well pray that they may be true to their divine Lord and Master.

LECTURE III.

THE MAKING OF THE SERMON

In the last lecture, we gave attention to the purpose and content of preaching. At this time we wish to consider more specifically the preparation and making of the sermon, a subject the practical importance of which should not be overlooked or minimized.

Preaching is not so simple a matter as it seems. It is surprising how many people hold the notion that all a preacher has to do is just to stand up in the pulpit and talk, presenting whatever may come into his mind at the time. We have met several persons, considered intelligent, who were quite surprised indeed when informed that a minister had to spend much of his time during the week in studying and preparing his Sunday's sermons. And occasionally there is to be met a minister who thinks that sermon preparation during the week is an unnecessary waste of time and that he can depend upon the inspiration of the moment when he enters the pulpit on Sunday morning. Now and then there may be found a man possessed of such a gift of volubility, and such a retentive memory and such an alert mind that he can follow this practice for a time. But, without prayerful study and industrious research, such men cannot long continue to

give their people real spiritual meat, and their mental and spiritual emptiness soon becomes apparent to their congregations. Then their usefulness ends.

Ministers, whether young or older, need the earnest warning against the temptation to relax their habits of study and to rely more and more upon late inspiration for their sermons. There is no such "inspiration" for the lazy or neglectful preacher and his attempts at preaching are bound to fail and be spiritually unproductive. However, we do believe that often the Lord helps out the honest pastor who has been so overcrowded by unexpected pastoral duties, that he could not make his needed and expected preparation, and that under such circumstances there may come such an inspiration as will enable him to preach effectively and acceptably. Industry in the Lord's service may prepare the way for inspiration in preaching, but laziness or indifference never will. The latter leads to intellectual flabbiness and spiritual failure.

As already indicated, the preparation of a sermon is not so simple as it may seem. In fact, the most careful preparation the circumstances will allow is always necessary, if the sermon is to be a worthy one. This preparation must be both spiritual and intellectual. No sermon should be undertaken without praying over it and seeking divine direction and help, while, at the same time, the best powers of the mind must be enlisted in its making. When it is remembered what preaching is and what is the nature of the holy office of the ministry, no

pastor will be satisfied with less than giving the most conscientious and thorough preparation to his pulpit messages.

“Preaching,” says Phillips Brooks, “is the communication of truth through a man to men.” That truth is the Gospel, the truth which centers in Christ, the Saviour. If we seek a definition of the sermon, that given by Webster is as direct and comprehensive as any: “a discourse delivered in public, usually by a clergyman, for the purpose of religious instruction, and grounded on some text or passage of Scripture.” Considering the solemn responsibility of the task and that immortal souls are at stake with salvation as the issue, the true Christian preacher will put his heart, mind and soul into his work.

I. Let us consider the preparation of the sermon somewhat more in detail. The careful pastor will begin early in the week. It is never wise to postpone voluntarily the beginning of sermon work until later, for unforeseen extra duties may arise and emergency calls may take of one’s time, making the former very difficult and unsatisfactory. Many ministers are accustomed to use Monday as rest day, but it is a wise habit at least to plan one’s work for the week on that day and to select texts and subjects for the next Sunday. Then the pastor is ready to get down to productive sermon study at once on Tuesday.

(1) Naturally, the very first step in the making of the sermon is the selection of the text and the

subject. The pastor asks himself, "What shall I preach next Sunday?" and must determine his line of thought and his subject matter.

Several questions suggest themselves at this point. One—should the subject or the text be determined first? The answer varies according to the kind of sermon which may be in the preacher's mind to give. If a topical sermon, then naturally the subject is chosen first, and then the text is sought which embodies the theme and applies it. If a textual sermon is undertaken and a single text furnishes the outline according to the subordinate clauses, necessarily it is the text which is first chosen while the subject follows. If it be the purpose to prepare an expository sermon, expounding a passage of Scripture, here also the text is chosen first, while the subject is derived from the passage under consideration.

With reference to the selection of the subject of a sermon, "there are three principles," says Phillips Brooks (Lectures on Preaching, page 153), "which have a right to enter into the decision. They are the bent of the preacher's inclination, the symmetry and 'scale' of all his preaching, and the peculiar needs of his people. I mention the three in the order in which they are apt to present themselves to the minister as he makes his choice. Reverse that order, begin with the last, and you have the elements of a right choice rightly arranged."

"First comes the sympathetic and wise perception of what the people need; not necessarily what

they consciously want, though, remember, no more necessarily what they do not want." The real spiritual needs of the flock will direct the choice. The second element of choice is the "desire to preserve a symmetry and proportion in our preaching," which of course "comes in to modify the action of the first." The successful pastor will preach for an object and, therefore, will always have a general plan and a definite order for his sermons throughout the year. This he must keep in mind in the choice of subjects. The third is the principle "that a man can preach best about what he at that moment wishes to preach about, the element of the preacher's own disposition." This should be considered and taken into account, but it cannot be allowed to become the first and controlling element in our choice. This would be a mistake. All three elements of the choice must be considered together in their proper relationship.

This leads us to remark how great a help one may secure from the use of the ancient calender of the church year. With many ministers, there is no plan, no order, no consecutive purpose in their teaching. They are likely to preach upon any subject or text which may strike the fancy of the moment, without reference to the other principles just stated above. They "float over the whole sea of truth, and plunge here and there, like a gull, on any subject that either suits the mood, or that some superficial intercourse with people" makes them conceive to be required by a popular need. (Brooks).

Such aimless and fruitless pulpit service would be prevented if we would seek orderliness of preaching by the observance of the church year with its great festivals and its pericopes or appointed lessons for the day. This practice "still leaves largest liberty. It is no bondage within which any man is hampered. But the great procession of the year, sacred to our best human instincts with the accumulated reverence of ages, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Whitsunday, 'the Trinity season,' leads those who walk in it, at least once every year, past all the great Christian facts, and, however, careless and selfish be the preacher, will not leave it in his power to keep them from his people. The church year, too, preserves the personality of our religion. It is concrete and picturesque. The historical Jesus is for ever there. It lays each life continually down beside the perfect life, that it may see at once its imperfection and its hope." (Brooks. Lectures on Preaching. Page 91).

The use of the lessons for the church year at the morning worship makes it much easier for the pastor in the determination of his themes while "the prolonged and connected course of sermons is a safeguard against mere flightiness and partialness in the choice of topics." At the evening services he may have the widest latitude for the use of such subjects as may be wise and needful.

Another question is suggested by an increasing practice of the present day: Is the use of a text

necessary or advisable? To this question we unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. However, there is a growing practice of preaching without Bible texts, but it is found chiefly among the modernists and theological liberals, many of whom quietly ignore the Scriptures and take up their subjects without announcing or discussing any Bible text. Considering their loose views of inspiration, this is not surprising and the action, whether so intended or not, is a slight upon the Word of God.

Objection to the use of texts is sometimes made on the ground that it is puerile to expand the few words of a single text into a sermon and that it restricts the preacher unduly to a limited range of thought. To this we cannot agree. The great themes of the Bible are too rich and suggestive to place any such limitation upon the preacher. On the other hand, the very definition of a sermon already given, implies the necessity of a text as the basis of the message, namely, a discourse intended for religious instruction, "grounded on some text or passage of Scripture." If the minister goes into the pulpit simply to deliver an address, as some do, he needs no Bible text, but if his high calling implies that he is a preacher of sermons, he of right ought to base them on the Word of God. Furthermore, he is distinctively a preacher of the Gospel. But the Gospel is embedded in the Scriptures and cannot be separated from the word. Therefore the evangelical preacher must base his discourses upon

portions of that inspired word. He should begin with a definite text.

There are other reasons also for using a Biblical text. If we hold that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are indeed "the only infallible rule of faith and practice," if we continue to hold the formal principle of the Reformation and of Protestantism, then the evangelical preacher will honor the Word of God by giving a text the first place, the place of honor, in the sermon which he preaches. The use of a text honors the word, and this honoring of the Word of God publicly before the congregation is ever needful.

Again, the use of a text in preaching gives divine authority to the theme. "This is the chief reason," says Prof. Fisk (*Manual of Preaching*, page 51), "for placing a passage of Scripture at the head of a discourse. Its theme at once becomes invested with a divine prerogative. It rests its claim to attention and regard not upon reasonings of men, but upon a declaration of God. Henceforth the theme stands forth robed in divine vestments, and men bow in its presence." Christian preaching must be authoritative, otherwise it is ineffective and unimpressive for the average man. The ambassador of Christ is expected to speak with authority, but that authority must come from the word.

In a practical way the method of preaching from a text assists the hearers to secure a greater knowledge of the Scriptures, aids them to remember both

the subject and the sermon and, at the same time, tends to hold the preacher more steadily to his theme. For all these reasons, we favor the use of Biblical texts in sermonizing and announcing them at the beginning of the delivery of the sermon.

(2) The next step in the preparation of the sermon is that of meditation upon the subject and text and the gathering of the materials. Here let me say, that no sermon ought to be undertaken without earnest, serious prayer for divine guidance. Pray over your sermon from the very beginning of its preparation. A sermon is not merely an intellectual and literary task, but it is a spiritual act which concerns God and His kingdom and the salvation of human souls. Only as it is made the subject of prayer can it be expected to be fruitful in awakening consciences and in touching the hearts of the hearers.

Along with the prayerful spirit there ought to be earnest and prolonged meditation upon the subject which has been chosen. With the careful study of the text and context both in the original and in the English version, let the pastor give himself to close and searching thinking upon his theme before he turns to his commentaries and other sources of materials. The temptation is often present to go at once to the commentaries, gather material and do little thinking of his own. In the haste so characteristic of the times, ministers are in constant danger of making their sermon preparation too hurriedly, with the consequent loss of unity, depth

and power. All people ought to find more time to think than they do, but especially is it necessary that the minister of the Gospel secure much time for meditation that by independent thinking he may make his sermons throb with the life of his own spirit and convictions.

To think seriously is hard work, and it may be easier to prepare sermons the other way, but the sermon which is the product of conscientious work and thought will be the superior. If text and subject do not open at once, do not give them up but persevere until they have yielded their truth and message to you. Then, after having gathered the materials, let there be meditation again, so that they may be marshalled most effectively for the carrying of the Gospel. I am appealing that we avoid hasty preparation which is the bane of much of our preaching, but that we give the time and toil of which the message of God is worthy. There is never any great preaching without hard thinking.

While we have stressed the necessity of original and independent thinking upon the subject, it is also needful to gather additional materials and make use of such proper helps as may be at hand. Consult several good commentaries and other helps which may bear on the subject. It is well to have the best thoughts and opinions of others as well as your own. If the subject admits of it, let history furnish you with material, or the best products of general literature, the works of great authors in various fields. Let any sources of materials con-

tribute facts, illustrations or ideas to the making of the sermon.

Not that I would have you just copy what others have said, or make yourself merely an agent or channel to convey the ideas of others, sacrificing thereby your own personality; that might quickly degenerate into plagiarism, which is dishonesty, and of which, no Christian minister, of all men, should ever be guilty. It is perfectly proper to quote from others, giving due credit. But in gathering outside materials, we must think them through, assimilate them and make them our own. "In transferring such materials to your sermon," says Prof. Fisk (P. 319), "you should be careful to have them pass through the crucible of your mind." They are "mainly valuable as a means of refreshing the mind with facts and thoughts previously acquired."

(3) Having done the preparatory work of the sermon and gathered the materials, it is wise to make a rough sketch or general outline before beginning to write or to prepare the sermon notes for actual preaching. The materials should be carefully sifted and then classified and arranged so as to fit the plan of your discourse. A working outline is always useful and helpful.

There has been much difference of opinion among teachers of Homiletics and great preachers as to the principal parts of the sermon. Some have included only three or four, while others would list as many as nine or ten. The natural outline of a

sermon, in our opinion, would include text, introduction, exposition of text, subject, division, development or discussion and conclusion. In accordance with such an order, the materials can be arranged.

II. We wish now to consider more specifically the making of the sermon, or, rather, some of the principles which prevail and the methods in use in the arrangement of the discourse.

First, there is the announcement of the text, except in such rare instances, when it may be considered wiser or more effective to delay until later in the discourse. Of the text we have already spoken at length and it is not necessary to discuss it here.

(1) The introduction is really preparatory to the sermon proper. Its design is "to prepare the hearers to listen with profit to the main discussion" of the subject and it serves to awaken and bring the hearer's thoughts and feelings into harmony and sympathy with the theme. It has long been a recognized principle of public speaking that it is unwise to rush hastily and abruptly into the discussion of a subject because the average audience is not prepared for sustained thinking beforehand. It is wiser to attract and enlist attention and thus prepare the audience for the announcement of the subject.

When the pastor enters his pulpit to preach, he finds the average congregation has come together with minds pre-occupied with many different sub-

jects of thought, perhaps most of them utterly unrelated to religious matters. As a matter of fact they have come together from a variety of motives, while some of the hearers are not eager at all to receive instruction or to listen to a sermon. Under a law of the human mind, under such circumstances, men do not at once enter easily or naturally into the consideration of a new subject of thought, but it is necessary to approach it gradually. The introduction serves therefore to make this gradual approach to the sermon proper and to lead the congregation into intellectual and spiritual readiness for the presentation of the subject and discussion.

The introduction should be brief, concise in statement, clear, simple, and with some relationship to the theme. Its materials may be drawn from experience or observation, from related subjects, from thoughts upon the importance or nature of the subject, or from the narrative in the context. Very often the latter offers a very useful and appropriate method of approach to the main body of the sermon. A devotional introduction occasionally may be used with impressiveness. The making of the introduction will require the best judgment of the preacher, for it may make or mar the effect of the entire sermon.

(2) The door of entrance to the sermon having thus been provided, the announcement of the subject may follow naturally. The subject should be brief and simple in form and should arise evidently from the text. The absence of obvious relationship

between text and subject is a serious defect. As to the advisability of making announcement of the subject, the practice of preachers has varied widely. Some have preferred not to make any announcement or statement of the theme, but have thought it advantageous to permit the hearers to discover it for themselves. Others hold, and with their opinion our judgment agrees, that the average congregation needs a clear and definite statement of the subject matter which is to engage its thought, so that no time may be lost in grasping the purpose of the speaker. The very nature of religious truth, so much of it abstract and with higher spiritual bearings, requires that the thought and purpose of the sermon should be made clear at the beginning. Besides, the announcement of the subject provides the center, evident to all, from which all the discourse radiates and to which it returns in its conclusion. It helps decidedly to preserve the unity of the message.

(3) Along with the statement of the subject, either before or immediately after, as the particular case may require, should go the exposition of the text. Sometimes, the text will stand out so clearly and definitely that it will need no special explanation, but usually it does. If the text in its thought is obscure, the exposition will make it clear. It is addressed especially to the understanding to satisfy the mind of the hearer as to the relationship legitimately of the subject to the text, to explain its meaning and teaching and to assure him

of its authority. Inasmuch as it is the Scripture which is to be expounded and enforced, the exposition assumes great importance and value.

Keeping in mind that the main purpose of the exposition is to explain the text and make it clear, it should be made as brief as possible. The meaning of some texts will be so evident that but little explanation will be necessary; others may require more and still others may need exegetical study. But, in all cases, it should be kept in mind that "the exposition is the bridge which connects the introduction with the main part of the discourse, and the audience should be taken over it as quickly as possible."

(4) Another important step in the making of the sermon, is that of the divisions. We have referred to the advisability of forming an outline in the preparatory study of the sermon, and this implies the division of the discourse into the main heads and then the sub-divisions of the thought and subject in their progress. No argument is necessary on this point as the advantage is evident.

Dr. Henry Ziegler remarks (The Preacher. Page 108-109), that "the divisions will sometimes be found in the text itself, either expressed or implied, and should, therefore, generally be included in the theme; but whether found in the text or not, they must always be legitimately deduced from the theme. The divisions should generally be few—not more than from two to five. The Puritan divines formerly had as many as twenty, thirty, or even

more divisions. They should be natural and not artificial; and they should, like the theme, be perspicuous, comprehensive, precise and dignified."

Several generations ago, the custom was quite general to make a statement of the general divisions of the sermon just before entering upon the development or discussion. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, nearly always did this. Today, this is sometimes but not often done, the circumstances determining whether it is advisable or not to do so. Our own feeling is that usually it is wiser to omit any announcement of the main heads, until each is reached in order in the discourse. On another question there is a wider difference of opinion and practice, namely, whether the divisions should be made evident and be announced in their proper places in the sermon. Many preachers of prominence and ability do not call attention at all to their heads or sub-heads, but strive to glide smoothly and easily from one point to another without attracting special notice. This may make for smoothness in literary style and may be more agreeable to many, but it is rather the lecture method.

Our own conviction favors making the plain announcement of each division as it is reached. It is sometimes objected that this practice leaves the impression of being formal and mechanical, but with this contention we do not agree. On the contrary, the clear statement of the divisions assists the preacher to give unity and clearness to his sermon and to hold more steadily to his subject and

purpose. At the same time it will enable the hearer to follow the line of thought and the progress of the argument in the discourse more readily, while it will assist him to apprehend and remember the thought. The average hearer finds difficulty in following the thought of a discourse, but the announcement of the divisions and sub-heads will serve as guideboards along the way so that he may grasp and retain the sermon as a whole.

(5) We turn now to the development of the sermon, by which term we designate the main body of the discourse, in which "the thought contained in the division is unfolded." Careful thought, much research and serious study of the Biblical text on the part of the minister have brought together the material which he wishes to use in the message he is preparing. This material must now be arranged in orderly form, following the plan or outline already made, according to the divisions. It will be needful to employ the utmost care in organizing the material of the sermon, in order to secure unity, completeness of discussion and the cumulative force of logical progression.

The forms which the development may take and the classification of sermons vary greatly among writers on Homiletics and in the practice of great preachers as well as among the rank and file of the ministry. Sermons may be classified according to the method of treating the text, but the most natural and convenient classification is that which has its ground in the method of treating the sub-

ject. Accordingly we may classify the development of the sermon as expository or explanatory, illustrative, argumentative and persuasive.

The expository sermon aims to explain or expound the text and subject and thus to give direct instruction in the word and the doctrines of the faith. Of this class we shall speak again. Illustrative sermons aim to clarify and enforce the subject by illustrations from life and character, *i. e.*, by facts, events and incidents drawn from all the wide fields of human life and experience, from history and biography, from science, literature and art, any realm of knowledge which is calculated to assist in the unfolding of the Gospel truth. The illustrative development of a theme may be very effective occasionally, but it should be used sparingly and wisely, lest the preacher degenerate into a mere story-teller and the sermon become thin intellectually and superficial in thought.

The argumentative sermon has as its object to bring confirmation to the faith of the believer and conviction to those who doubt or have difficulties, intellectual or otherwise, in accepting the doctrines of the Christian religion. Doctrinal preaching is usually argumentative and is necessary for instruction and for the purposes just indicated. It is not easy preaching for it requires the closest mental application and the clearest reasoning, but it will be conducive to large results among the more thoughtful and earnest hearers, while it is stimulating to the preacher as well.

It is to be noted that our Lord employed the argumentative method throughout most of his discourses and parables, while St. Paul "was emphatically an argumentative preacher." Many of the greatest modern preachers have used this method frequently, as Luther, Calvin, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, Finney, Seiss, Storrs, and many others.

The persuasive development of sermonic discourse aims directly to move the will of the hearer to action. This is its immediate object. It is not enough to give instruction, to encourage, confirm and bring conviction of the truth, but the hearer must be persuaded to accept Christ as His Saviour, to confess Him within the Church and to take up the service of Christ. This sermonic form appeals to the motives for Christian faith, life and service. This is the natural form of the class of what may be called evangelistic sermons, or those which bring the Gospel appeal to the heart, mind and conscience of the congregation.

At this point, I wish to direct attention further to the value and importance of expository preaching. Topical and textual sermons, based either on the subject chosen or on the clauses and natural divisions of the Bible text which has been selected, without question serve the purpose of setting forth the Gospel in impressive form and should be used when time and circumstances demand them. But when the particular purpose is, as it often should be, to give circumstantial instruction in the Scrip-

tures and in the way of salvation, then the expository method is usually preferable.

The faithful, accurate exposition of the Scriptures, however, is not easy and it requires much more sustained study than any other class of sermons. Indeed, expository sermons, in our judgment, are the most difficult to prepare, but the preparation and the preaching pay both the preacher and the congregation better in spiritual results than any others. It should be kept clearly in view that a running commentary on the passage of Scripture is not an exposition; but the latter has unity of thought and a central theme, around which gather the main points and chief heads of the sermon. A running commentary or explanation of a Bible passage may be very helpful and valuable, but it is not strictly speaking a sermon. An expository sermon will take the central theme of a passage or chapter and develop the argument for the truth directly from the successive portions of the passage which is studied.

Inasmuch as instruction in the clear teachings of the Word of God is so vital and fundamental in all true preaching, the importance and value of the expository discourse are apparent. Moreover, a large proportion of the great preaching in the past has followed the expository method. The homilies of the early Christian centuries were partly running commentaries, but largely expositions of the Scriptures. The homilies of St. Chrysostom are renowned and he has been held justly as "the prince

of expository preachers." The greater part of the preaching of the Reformers at the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, was expository. Martin Luther and John Calvin are outstanding examples of the expository style of pulpit discourse in the Reformation period.

Calvin was without question a great theologian and he has left some of the clearest, soundest expositions of Scripture which the Church holds among her sermonic treasures. Luther, with more of a popular style, stands out particularly as a very great expositor while all his work is the product of sound exegesis. The sermons of Luther which are published and within our reach, will well repay frequent and careful study. As an example of his method, we give a brief outline of one of his sermons, that on the Gospel for the Third Sunday in Advent, Matt. 11: 2-10. We take this from Lenker's edition of Luther's Sermons on the Gospels.

Contents:—Christ's answer to the question John asked Him; His praise of John, and the application of this Gospel.

I. The question John puts to Christ.

(1) The thoughts of Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory on this question.

(2) Why John asked this question.

(3) The nature of this question.

(4) The necessity of this question.

Christ must do all, the goodness of others never helps us.

II. Christ's answer given in words and deeds.

(1) The nature of this answer.

(2) How and why the answer by His works is greater than the answer by His words.

(3) How this answer is to be used against false teachers. It is seldom that one preaches right when his life is not right.

(4) How we are to understand the words of Christ's answer: "The poor have good tidings preached unto them."

(5) How Christ in His answer meets the carnal and worldly thoughts of John's disciples.

(6) What part of this answer deserves special attention?

III. How and why Christ praises John.

(1) Because of his firmness.

(2) Because of his hard and coarse raiment.

(3) Because of his high office.

IV. The application of this Gospel. It should serve us:

(1) In purifying and strengthening our faith.

(2) In doing truly good works.

One of the ablest Lutheran expository preachers of the last third of the nineteenth century was Dr. Theodore Zahn, of Erlangen, who possessed an unusual power and insight in the exposition of difficult texts and doctrines. We may give just the general division of two of his sermons. The first is on "Christ's Temptation and Ours," Matt. 4:1-11, divided as follows: Introduction: I. We shall see that He was tempted in all points like as

we are. II. That He fought with the weapons which are also at our disposal. III. That He fought and conquered that we, like Him, may also fight and conquer.

The second is on the theme, "Calm After Storm," Matt. 8:23-27: Introduction: I. We see Jesus sleeping and the disciples seized by the terror of death. II. Jesus awaking and rebuking the disciples for their little faith. III. Jesus rebuking the stormy sea; then there is a great calm. Conclusion.

Among the very noblest discourses published during the nineteenth century are those of Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton. His sermons are "nearly all either textual, being based upon the natural divisions of the text; or they follow and elucidate the thoughts of an entire chapter, as in the celebrated lectures on the Corinthians." Personally, it has always been a delight to me to read Robertson's sermons, especially his expositions. Dr. Chalmers' "Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans" also are eminently worthy of study as superior models of expository sermons. Dr. Alexander Maclaren's sermons are also fine models of this type. This style of preaching has been followed especially by the Scotch pulpit and by many of the ablest English preachers, and their sermons, as we have been privileged to hear or read them, have been very impressive and strong presentations of the word.

In the American pulpit there have been many masters of sermonic style and power, foremost

among whom stand Theodore Parker and Henry Ward Beecher. In the American Lutheran pulpit, there have been many strong preachers, such as Dr. C. A. Swenson, Dr. S. J. Esbjorn, Dr. John G. Morris and others, but especially Dr. Joseph A. Seiss, who for so many years was justly famed as one of Philadelphia's greatest preachers. Dr. Seiss's sermons or "Lectures on the Apocalypse" have had an extraordinary circulation in published form and are fine examples of expository discourse. Indeed, American Lutheran preachers have tended far more to expository preaching than those of most other denominations.

The general tendency of the American pulpit has been to avoid exposition and to confine itself largely to the topical and textual treatments of single texts. This may have made for more popular preaching, but we believe it would be more conducive to greater power for instruction and spiritual appeal, if the American ministry would devote themselves more largely to Biblical exposition. It is our conviction, and we speak from experience and observation, that, in the end, the method of expository preaching will be found the most satisfactory in every way.

(6) The conclusion of the sermon, to which we now come, has been defined as "that part of it by which the thought contained in the development is practically applied." Every truth drawn from the Scriptures has some practical application to the Christian life and to human conduct, for, as Paul

says (II Tim. 3: 16), "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

The conclusion is very important for, if not done well, it may weaken and perhaps nullify the effect of a good sermon; but, if well done, it may assure a permanent and helpful effect. Many an otherwise good sermon has been spoiled by a weak ending and many an ordinary sermon has left a permanent impression for good by means of a strong and well-formed conclusion. The preacher will be wise, therefore, if he gives much careful attention to the manner in which he brings his discourse to a close.

The importance of the conclusion appears further from the fact, as has been claimed with much truth, that "the hearer, unless aided by the preacher, rarely makes a faithful application of the truth to himself. Many hearers do not clearly see the relation of a truth to themselves, unless it be pointed out to them; and many are averse to the effort necessary to trace out, and make the proper application of a truth to themselves." (Fisk). The preacher may be able to accomplish but little good by his sermon unless he can press home the main thought seriously and impressively upon the hearts and consciences of his congregation. And yet, in spite of its importance, the conclusion of the sermon is often apt to be slighted and to be poorly done.

Every sermon must have a climax of its argument. Some preachers are accustomed to find their climax in the course of the development, but usually it has its place in the conclusion, and this is the more appropriate as it is here that the final application can be made. The conclusion may be in the form of a recapitulation of the main heads of the discourse, stated tersely and simply, and followed by a climactic application, or it may be in the form of an exhortation. The hortatory conclusion, however, is most appropriate to a persuasive sermonic development.

It has been said of Spurgeon (Dr. James G. K. McClure), that he always "tried to make the very close of his sermon his climacteric. He had a theory that appeal should be introduced earlier in the sermon and that the sermon should end with the inculcation of some great, vital principle or some strong, majestic declaration of God—so that that principle or that declaration should be the highest peak in the range." Such an ending, well made, is very effective.

It is evident that the closing of a sermon should be made with prayerful care. It should be simple and brief, but full of energy and spiritual power. Speaking of public discourse, Aristotle recommends "that the closing sentences of the peroration be compact, and without connectives." In the modern sermon, "the preacher should strike quickly, and surely, and then stop."

There is one other question to which we wish to refer: Should the minister write his sermons? We would answer in the affirmative. As much as is possible, it is advisable to write one's sermons. This is especially so during the earlier years of sermonizing, and until the preacher has learned the technique of sermon making and has developed a literary style which will permanently add to the worth and power of his public speaking. The young preacher who does not write his sermons at first is in danger of cultivating a looseness in thinking and in his literary style, which will inevitably detract from the effectiveness of his preaching.

But the careful writing of the sermon will promote clearness in thinking, brevity and definiteness in stating what you wish to say, together with order and power in delivery. The continued practice of writing will also make for greater correctness in grammar and rhetoric while it will promote excellence in literary form. These last, of course, are not the main things for which to concern ourselves in the making of sermons, but they contribute much toward making *good* sermons. Many preachers allow themselves to become loose in their use of English and then guilty of obvious and even offensive lapses in grammar and rhetoric. These surely detract from the sermon, not only in the eyes of the cultured and educated, but also in the judgment of those who may be uneducated but yet do appreciate that which is of high quality. The writing of the sermon, independently of the further

question of whether to read the sermon afterward or to preach it without manuscript, is exceedingly helpful in securing correctness, clearness and forcefulness in the statement of the Christian truth which forms the substance of the message. The man who would be a good preacher ought to write much.

This principle I wish to emphasize: If you are to preach the everlasting Gospel of salvation, the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen, than which no nobler theme can engage the attention of men, do not stint time, study, toil or prayer in the preparation of your sermons. You preach for souls. Your sermon aims at the salvation of sinners and the building up in the faith of believers. It deserves, therefore, your finest toil and consecration, the giving of your best in its preparation.

However, it should be borne in mind that the Christian preacher goes into the pulpit, not to deliver orations, but to preach sermons. It is often claimed that it is impossible for a preacher to prepare two good, strong sermons every week, and that no more than one should be expected of the modern preacher. Replying to this claim, Phillips Brooks has left us a paragraph, with which we close: "It is impossible," he says, "if by a sermon, you intend a finished oration. It is as impossible to produce that twice as it is undesirable to produce it once a week. But that a man who lives with God, whose delight is to study God's words in the Bible, in the world, in history, in human nature,

who is thinking about Christ, and man, and salvation every day—that he should not be able to talk about these things of his heart seriously, lovingly, thoughtfully, simply, for two half hours every week, is inconceivable, and I do not believe it. Cast off the haunting incubus of the notion of great sermons. Care not for your sermon, but for your truth, and for your people; and subjects will spring up on every side of you, and the chances to preach upon them will be all too few. I beg you not to fall into this foolish talk about too much preaching. . . . If you have anything to say, and say it bravely and simply, men will come to hear you.” (Lectures on Preaching. P. 152).

LECTURE IV.

THE PREACHING OF THE SERMON

Luther, in his "Table Talk," has a paragraph, rather blunt in statement and oddly arranged, but which offers some very practical advice to the preacher: "A good preacher should have these properties and virtues: first, to teach systematically; secondly, he should have a ready wit; thirdly, he should be elegant; fourthly, he should have a good voice; fifthly, a good memory; sixthly, he should know when to make an end; seventhly, he should be sure of his doctrine; eighthly, he should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honor, in the word; ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered of every one."

This piece of advice, so quaintly put, reveals the fact that Luther attached great importance to the manner in which the sermon is preached, in addition to other important considerations. He also said on another occasion, "I would not have preachers torment their hearers, and detain them with long and tedious preaching, for the delight of hearing vanishes therewith, and the preachers hurt themselves." Luther is right, for the preacher dare not tire the hearers or destroy the "delight of hearing," lest he nullify the influence of his message.

Indeed, the delivery of the sermon is so important that it should receive very special attention. A sermon may be well prepared and be admirable in every way, in subject and material, in arrangement and composition, but, if there are serious deficiencies in delivery, its effectiveness may be almost wholly lost. So far as the effect of a discourse upon the hearers is concerned, much depends upon the manner in which it is delivered. In the opinion of many of the world's great orators, one of the chief qualifications of a public speaker is a good delivery, or his "action." Using the illustration of another (Wilder Smith), "A piano may be good in every respect, but if the player cannot draw forth its potential music it might as well be of inferior quality." So a sermon may be an excellent one, but if the power and ability to preach it well be lacking, its message may fail. But a good sermon, well delivered, will be doubly effective. Let the minister be mindful of the importance of a good delivery and then give serious attention to the making of his sermon impressive and effective.

Before taking up several practical suggestions which have a direct bearing upon the preaching of the sermon, I wish to consider a question of considerable importance, the question of the method to be employed in the delivery of the sermon. Shall we read our sermons, or commit to memory written sermons and thus preach them, or preach from brief notes, or preach extemporaneously? Each of these methods has its strong advocates, and it

would be easy to list numerous able preachers who have used it successfully. Each method also has its favorable points which commend it and its difficulties as well.

The method of reading the sermon from manuscript has been followed by many great preachers and has several very strong arguments in its favor. It makes possible greater accuracy and correctness in statement and argument, greater clearness in thought, better logic and a more correct literary style than can usually be secured by the third and fourth methods. These qualities will more likely impress favorably the class of very thoughtful and educated men, who are accustomed to accurate thinking. However, the average audience does not take readily to the reading of sermons; whether rightly or wrongly, the people do not like the method, and, in consequence, it becomes difficult to stir them and move them to action. Indeed, the reading method is more adapted to the lecture room and to instruction, in the presence of selected and limited gatherings, where logical argument is the chief end, than to the moving of great audiences to moral and spiritual action. Reading is likely to leave the impression of being artificial and formal, and, if it seems to be mechanical and its tones unnatural, the effect of the sermon is nullified.

The truth is, there are but few good readers, few preachers who can read a sermon well and impressively. If a minister wishes to read his sermons, he should be very certain first of all that he

can read well. If he can make himself so familiar with his sermon that he can read freely without being "tied to his manuscript," as the expression goes, then he may largely overcome these objections. But the congregation cannot be much interested by the preacher who keeps his eyes continually fixed upon his manuscript.

The second method is that of delivering a sermon memoriter, or after having committed it to memory. This method may be used effectively and obviates most of the objections to reading a sermon, for it liberates the preacher from his manuscript and gives him greater freedom of physical action. This was largely the practice of the early New England divines and is the practice of many good preachers today. There are some ministers who have such retentive memories that, after reading their sermons over a few times, they can preach them accurately and freely with but little variation from the written page. The work of memorizing, however, is usually burdensome.

There are also important objections to preaching from memory, unless one has made himself a master of the method. The very effort to remember will tend to distract attention from the thought and hinder putting the spirit and expression into the message which ought to be there. Consequently there is the danger that the delivery become mechanical and declamatory and fail of that naturalness, freedom and ease of manner, which are so necessary in order to impress an audience. Peo-

ple are quick to "sense" a mechanical and unnatural style of speaking and then it becomes almost impossible to appeal to their emotions or to move the will to action.

The third method of delivering sermons is that of preaching from brief notes. A general outline of the sermon is prepared, consisting of the main heads and sub-divisions, the more important statements and leading thoughts, guiding words and suggestive phrases, special references and perhaps some quotations written in full. A glance now and then at his notes gives the preacher his line of thought and all the mental guidance he may need. Much serious study is needed, under this method, to store the mind and memory with the materials of the sermon and to have their substance and phrasing at ready command for delivery. A strong point in favor of this manner of preaching is that the speaker is free from his manuscript and yet has the advantage of the guidance and suggestiveness of his notes. He can look his audience in the face and can make his appeal more direct and impressive. He possesses freedom in action and in the choice of words, while his sermon is made flexible and adaptable to the conditions and needs of the moment. Congregations are not likely to object to sermons from notes, for the use of the latter is scarcely noticeable. This method of preaching is more generally practiced than any other among the ministry. It is the surest and safest method.

The last method of delivery which I mention is that of extempore preaching. In its original and stricter usage, the term *extempore* applies to that which is spoken on the spur of the moment, without previous study or preparation. However, in common usage now and especially as referring to the preaching of sermons, it applies "to that which is spoken without the use of a manuscript, provided it has not been learned by heart" (Webster), but admitting study and preparation beforehand. Successful extempore preaching requires the most careful and thorough preparation.

There can be no question but that this form of public discourse is the most effective in reaching and stirring an audience. Extempore preaching is the most natural method and permits full freedom in action, in thought and in choice of language. "The sermon comes most directly from the heart, and expresses the emotions of the heart at the instant, and when all aglow with the thought. The language is born of the occasion, and is more apt to be appropriate, direct and forcible." The preacher "can closely watch his hearers throughout his discourse, and adapt each part of it to their changing moods." (Fisk). The masses of the people will be more quickly moved and more readily responsive to such preaching than to any other.

Extemporaneous speaking has been the practice of most of the greatest orators and there have been many great extemporaneous preachers of the Gospel, such as Dr. Robert Hall and Dr. Richard

S. Storrs. However, this is the most difficult kind of preaching to make successful and effective. If a speaker has a trained and retentive memory and possesses a ready flow of language, a large vocabulary and plenty of good common sense, he may make a success of it. However, while there have been many great extemporaneous preachers, they have been but a small minority of the ministry. Extempore preaching (good preaching, I mean), is so difficult that most of us cannot succeed very well at it.

There are dangers attending it also. The temptation is strong to fall back into hasty thinking and careless expression, with frequent repetition. Facility in the command of language is often an unfortunate gift, for it may bring the temptation to depend unduly upon this facility to the omission and neglect of that thorough preparation which is absolutely necessary to a good sermon. And if such sermons become thin and superficial, marred by loose thinking and faulty English they become poor and powerless. This is the trouble with much of the extempore preaching of our day. Vocal vigor and pretended earnestness in delivery cannot make up for the lack of mental industry and neglect of preparation.

Extempore preaching, however, is the highest ideal of public preaching and it ought to be the goal of every minister. It is not wise for the young preacher to attempt it until he is sure he has secured the foundation for it and is ready to give the

hardest kind of toil to its practice. Let him write sermons frequently, especially in his early ministry, that he may acquire a good sermonic style and the power of expressing himself accurately, for he cannot become a good preacher without doing so. But at last the best and most effective method of delivery is that of extempore preaching, or preaching without manuscript. The late Dr. Revere Weidner, of the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, once said to a friend, "Doctor, I do not know what your practice is, but your people will like a plainer sermon better, delivered freely from brief notes, than a polished manuscript read." Strive to cultivate the free delivery of your sermons, without any notes at all, if possible, but at least, with no more than brief notes which may be a suggestive guide in the act of delivering the sermon.

I wish now that we may consider some practical suggestions for the preaching of the sermon.

1. A pastor should prepare carefully for the act of preaching. It is a great mistake to suppose that all his work is done when his homiletical task is completed and that he can permit the delivery of the sermon take care of itself. He must give much thought to the delivery of the message that the truth prepared may be given to the congregation in the most effective way. Let him keep himself in good physical condition for the physical reacts upon the mental and spiritual. Let him study his sermon again for delivery, that he may know where to place the proper emphasis, how to give it expression and

that he may be so familiar with his message that he can present it strongly and appealingly.

There should also be the preparation of prayer before the giving of the sermon. No man can be in the spirit of proclaiming God's message to men, unless he have first been in communion with God. Before going into the pulpit, every preacher ought to bow humbly before the Lord and seek His divine blessing upon the message he brings. It is the heaven-blessed sermon, supported by believing prayer, which brings forth spiritual results. Moreover, the pastor ought to forget himself and think only of his message and his hearers. In this connection I quote what Luther has to say (Table Talk. Section 424) :

“Cursed are all preachers that in the church aim at high and hard things, and, neglecting the saving health of the poor unlearned people, seek their own honor and praise, and therewith to please one or two ambitious persons. When I preach I sink myself down. I regard neither doctors nor magistrates, of whom are here in this church above forty; but I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of whom are more than two thousand. I preach to those, directing myself to them that have need thereof. Will not the rest hear me? The door stands open unto them; they may begone. I see that the ambition of preachers grows and increases; this will do the utmost mischief in the church, and produce great disquietness and discord; for they will needs teach high things touching

matters of state, thereby aiming at praise and honor; they will please the worldly wise, and meantime neglect the simple and common multitude.

“An upright, godly and true preacher should direct his preaching to the poor, simple sort of people. . . . But to sprinkle out Hebrew, Greek and Latin in their public sermons, savors merely of show, according with neither time nor place.”

Luther's point is well worthy of consideration. Let the pastor prepare for his preaching by resolutely putting away any thought of personal glory; let him rather think of his message and of the Lord who gave it and of the people who need the Gospel of grace and salvation. Let him go into his pulpit prayerfully and forgetful of self; then he will be strong.

2. Do not consider preaching as a task but as a privilege and an opportunity for service. Much depends upon the minister's mental attitude toward the act of preaching.

If he sees it simply as a burdensome task which must be done at certain specified times and intervals; if he thinks of it only as a necessary piece of work in order to earn his salary and his daily bread; if he fails to put his heart and his personal interest in the giving of his message, then he is sure to lack both in power and in appeal. But if he sees in his pulpit ministration a high spiritual privilege as he speaks for Almighty God; if he feels his personal responsibility both towards his Lord and his congregation; if he preaches with a sincere and

real passion for souls; if he finds a real joy in the service he renders; then his sermon as delivered will carry a power and an appeal which will be certain to bring spiritual fruits in those who hear.

To the true minister of the Gospel, the act of preaching is not a task, but a joy. It is a solemn responsibility, but one that is welcomed because of its opportunity to bear faithful witness to His Lord and to serve Him and His Church.

3. While a right mental attitude to preaching is needful, a good speaking voice is a physical requisite to the effective delivery of the sermon. I do not mean to imply that a man ought not to preach unless he have a voice of the highest quality. A man is not responsible for the kind of voice nature gives him originally, and there have been many able and good preachers who have not been endowed with good voices. There may have been weakness or defects in quality or pitch, and yet they have made a success of their preaching.

However, I do mean to say this, that the possession of a good voice is an asset of very great value in public speaking, and if a preacher or other public speaker is conscious that his voice is not the best, he should take every means of training and developing it in order to make the very best out of it. The human voice is a wonderful instrument and is capable of a high degree of training and culture in the matter of flexibility of tone, pitch, strength and expression. Serious difficulties, even, can be overcome and remedied by determined ef-

fort. There is the familiar story of Demosthenes, who had a serious impediment in his speech. Spurred by his ambition, it is said that he practiced persistently at the seashore with a pebble in his mouth, until he had overcome the habit of stammering, and he made himself the greatest orator Athens ever produced. Persevering training will develop a potentially good voice and overcome many vocal defects in others and render them effective. A preacher ought to strive for the best.

Of Whitefield, it is said, "With a full and beaming countenance, and the frank and easy port which the English people love, he combined a voice of rich compass, which could equally thrill over Moorfields in musical thunder or whisper its terrible secret in every private ear; and to his gainly aspect and tuneful voice he added a most expressive and eloquent action." His wonderful voice and his knowledge of how to use it properly contributed much to his greatness as a preacher.

One writer tells of seeing and hearing Daniel Webster at Albany: "A vast crowd assembled by the park in front of Congress Hall, and the statesman, enfeebled by age and sickness, came out slowly to address the concourse. The ponderous movement of the arm, as it rose and fell in gesture; the deep tones, like the slow vibration of a great bell; the emphatic pauses and deliberate utterance, remain, after thirty years, fixed in the memory of one who was then a mere boy." Of course there are but few Whitefields and Websters and but few

voices like theirs, but I do urge that we owe it to our high calling that we make the best possible use of the voices with which God and nature have endowed us. Train them for the Lord's service.

4. What has just been said prompts a further suggestion: Let every student for the ministry and every pastor in active service give much attention to the cultivation of oratory, the art of public speaking. And yet this is just what very many do not do. It is passing strange that so many ministers will give the utmost care to the preparation of good sermons and then will give no attention to the manner in which they shall deliver them to their congregations, seemingly thinking that the manner of the preaching of the sermon is a minor consideration and of small moment.

However, it is not a matter of small moment whether or not the supremely important Gospel truth shall be presented effectively. Oratory and eloquence in public speech have played a not inconsiderable part in the world's history. Demosthenes and other Greek orators swayed great audiences to the determination of public policies. Cicero aroused the Roman public with his masterly orations. St. Bernard stirred multitudes to take the cross and to follow its sacred standard to the Crusades. The fiery eloquence of Mirabeau was responsible for the French Revolution. The oratory of Chatham and Fox, of Edmund Burke and Disraeli and Gladstone determined English history for a century. And the eloquence of Richard Henry Lee and Pat-

rick Henry, of the Adamses and Randolph, contributed much to the making of our American Republic. Why should not the graces and power of oratory be enlisted in the service of the Gospel and of our Lord, the King of kings? They should be and they have been. Chrysostom, Augustine, Bernard, Luther, Whitefield, Henry Ward Beecher and a host of others have employed them to the glory of God. And so it should be now.

Effective public speaking is an art. Truly effective speakers have never relied only on enthroned blind impulses but they have studied the art of oratory and the psychology of audiences, how to awake their interest, to stir their feelings, to bring conviction and assent and then to arouse to action. Quoting Prof. A. E. Phillips (*Effective Speaking*. P. 15), "They have controlled and directed it with the judgment born of a careful study of the laws governing action and belief. They recognized that entrenched error, prejudice, self-interest, conceit, doubt, fear, desire, ignorance, are barriers to conviction and that these barriers could only be broken down or overcome by the application of certain principles of psychology. The speaker, if he would achieve his purpose, and achieve it with the least of effort—and that is art—must realize that every step in the development of a speech demands the exercise of the judgment upon the psychology of impression. His business is objective. It concerns the listener. It is a question of how can I get my listener to see my thought as clearly as I see it, to

feel it as vividly as I feel it, to believe it as deeply as I believe it, to act upon it as sincerely as I act upon it."

We ought then to cultivate the art of public speaking. Especially, we wish to recommend earnestly that every student in the college who has the ministry in view, should make diligent use of the opportunities and privileges afforded by the college literary societies. Some do not do so and lose much by the omission. The training and experience which may thus be secured will prove of the greatest value and help. We are aware that the emphasis in college life generally, outside the class room, has greatly changed. Thirty and forty years ago that emphasis was laid on the work of the literary societies and most of the students took active part in them. Today, generally, the main emphasis, outside the class room, is given to athletic sports and social functions and a lesser degree of interest and attention is given to religious organizations and the literary societies. Usually but a small proportion of the student body takes part in the latter. But, notwithstanding this shift of emphasis (and it is to be regretted in its extreme manifestation), the student preparing for the ministry ought by all means to give much attention to the training in public speaking which he may acquire through the literary society. There, by experience, he may gain mental poise, ease of manner, ability to think on his feet and the power to express himself readily.

While we have been urging the cultivation of the art of oratory, there is another side to be considered. The art in sermon making and in sermon preaching should never be made prominent so as to attract attention, for art is meant only to serve the chief purpose of pulpit ministration, which is the proclamation of the Gospel. If the art is too apparent, it inevitably detracts from the message. The sermons of the great French preachers of the eighteenth century were too plainly works of art and this fact militates against them. Macaulay tells us in his brilliant essay on Southey's "Bunyan," that James the Second once sat for his portrait to Varelst, the famous flower painter. When the work was done, the king appeared "in the midst of a bower of sunflowers and tulips, which completely drew away attention from the central figure, so that all who looked at it took it for a flower piece." The preacher must take care not to hide the face of the Christ and His Gospel behind the flowers of an exaggerated and conspicuous art or of too much sermon rhetoric. Employ the art of public discourse, but use it wisely.

5. Another suggestion comes to mind at this point: Preach so as to be heard and understood by your congregation to the last man. It is here that many ministers and other public speakers seriously fail, in that they cannot be heard by more than a portion of their auditors. The writer has frequently sat in an audience or congregation when he could with difficulty hear what the speaker was

saying, and when those further in the rear could not hear at all. Even if one can hear partially, the strain and effort to hear go far to weaken the effect of the message. In some instances this may not be the fault of the preacher. His voice may be naturally weak or the church building may have imperfect acoustics.

But in the majority of instances, the speaker has refrained from "letting out his voice," and has not used it with sufficient strength and skill to enable his congregation to hear clearly and with both physical and mental ease. He has perhaps fallen into the habit of keeping his voice tones too low to fill the church or to carry well. This is a great mistake. I would not have a preacher shout or use his voice with a discordant loudness, for this also will detract from the effect of the sermon, but let him use his voice with sufficient strength, gauging it to the building and the audience. It is useless to preach if the people cannot hear you.

It is important also to enunciate clearly and distinctly, using a degree of deliberation in speaking which will make this desired end possible. Many preachers "run their words together" and thus make them indistinct, blurring the mental impression as well. Intelligent care as to enunciation and distinctness in the use of the speaking voice will contribute much to making the sermon effective. Deliberateness has been characteristic of the large majority of the great orators. This was the case with Daniel Webster. Of William Wirt, one of our famous

orators, we are told by his biographer, "He was calm, deliberate, and distinct in his enunciation. His key was that of earnest, animated argument." It was said of the celebrated preacher, Dr. Nettleton, "That whisper of his was so distinct, so full of feeling, so potent, that it penetrated every corner of the house, and his distinct pronunciation was one of the great excellences of his preaching."

In this connection, Luther has this to say (Table-talk. Section 405): "To speak deliberately and slowly best becomes a preacher; for thereby he may more effectually and impressively deliver his sermon. Seneca writes of Cicero, "that he spake deliberately from the heart." Therefore, speak clearly and distinctly. However, we do not mean to imply that all fire and forcefulness and warmth of feeling should be omitted from the delivery of the sermon. Not at all, for effective preaching requires all these elements. But, preach to be heard and understood.

6. Yet further, an element which is essential to a preacher's success and power is that of thorough-going sincerity and conviction. Every one will grant, of course, that a minister ought to have his heart in his work and that he ought to believe what he preaches. If he does not, he is not fit to preach. But he ought to come before his congregation with evident sincerity of purpose and conviction of the truth of his message. This attitude the people will feel intuitively and will respond readily.

It is sometimes charged that this attitude of sincerity is often wanting in the ministry; I do not believe that it is lacking, only often preachers may seem not to be sincere because of a hesitant and easy-going manner. An anecdote in point and one often quoted, is that concerning Betterton, a famous English actor. When asked, by a prelate of the English church, "how it came to pass that the clergy, who spoke of things real, affected the people so little, and the players, who spoke of things barely imaginary, affected them so much?" he said, 'My lord, I can assign but one reason: we players speak of things imaginary as though they were real, and too many of the clergy speak of things real as though they were imaginary.' "

Perhaps this explains the mistaken impression so often present. The Christian preacher is dealing with the greatest realities in the world, the spiritual realities of God and His eternal Kingdom, and yet so often his manner of speaking is apologetic, hesitating and even expressive of seeming doubt. It is not surprising then if the people think he is not sincere, to the hurt of the message he brings. If the pastor believes the Gospel he preaches, then let his manner of delivery be that of positive conviction and authority; let him speak with a transparent sincerity, and his sermon will carry power to convince and move the congregation.

Such preaching as that just indicated is sure to leave a serious and deep impression. One of the finest encomiums ever bestowed on a preacher was

that given by Louis XIV, of France, to the eloquent Bishop of Clermont, Massillon, to whom we have already referred. After hearing him preach at Versailles, the king said to him, "Father, I have heard many great orators in this chapel; I have been highly pleased with them: but for you, whenever I hear you, I go away displeased with myself; for I see more of my own character." It was the evident sincerity and earnestness of Massillon which gave power to his eloquent sermon to touch the conscience of the king.

Another illustration in point is told of Whitefield and Lord Chesterfield. The latter "was listening in Lady Huntington's pew," when Whitefield "described the sinner under the character of a blind beggar led by a little dog. The dog escapes, from some cause, and he was left to grope his way guided only by his staff. Unconsciously he wanders to the edge of a precipice; his staff drops from his hand, down the abyss too far to send back an echo; he reaches forward cautiously to recover it; for a moment he poises on vacancy," and then, while the whole congregation was tense with thrilled suspense, Chesterfield shouted, "'He is gone,' as he sprang from his seat to prevent the catastrophe." This was not simply the power of art and eloquence; alone, they are cold. But when they are set on fire by sincere warmth of feeling and conviction of truth, there is power to stir and move men to action. This, however, must be not a simulated earnestness. Reality alone stirs the hearts of men.

7. Preach for a definite object, preach for souls and expect results. The great purpose of Christian preaching, as we have already pointed out, is evangelization. This is a broad and inclusive term which includes the winning of souls for Christ, the salvation of sinners, on the one hand, and the building up of believers in faith and life, on the other. In the preparation of his sermons the minister ought always to keep this object clearly before him in some one of its forms. Every sermon ought to have a definite object.

Likewise, when the preacher goes into the pulpit to deliver the message which he has prepared, he should have an aim, he should keep steadily in mind the object of his preaching at this particular hour. He may have the purpose of direct evangelization, the conviction and persuasion of the unsaved and leading them to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour; he may have instruction in doctrine or morals as his object, or to give inspiration to more consecrated service, or to bring comfort and help to those who have been in sorrow or trouble. He should never forget that he stands in the pulpit for the cure of souls. Conceivably, a preacher might undertake to deliver a sermon with no object further than just to fulfill a stated and necessary task which he will be glad to have done with, or to perform a service just as a bread-winner and to enable him to draw his salary. Such a preacher cannot in the nature of the case long succeed and

must die in spirit and usefulness; he ought to guard his own soul against such spiritual degeneration.

We are convinced, however, that men of this type in the pulpit are rare. On the contrary, the average minister of the Gospel is honest, sincere, devoted, self-sacrificing and has entered his high calling with the one lofty purpose of fulfilling his Lord's command. As he rises to preach the everlasting Gospel on the Lord's Day, let him keep this object before him and preach for souls. Then, expect results; look for sinners to be saved and for believers to deepen in spiritual life and to grow in grace. I think it was Adoniram Judson, of Burmah, who said: "Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God." This is a worthy motto; let us make it ours in the pulpit as in other places, and God will give the harvest.

8. Another matter deserving of serious attention is that of reverence in the pulpit. The sermon should be delivered with that measure of respect and reverence befitting the great themes which the preacher is discussing. Buffoonery should be banished from the pulpit. A light and flippant manner of preaching, or a careless manner, is altogether unbecoming the dignity of the Gospel and tends to belittle its message. God is in the midst of His holy temple, and with a reverent recognition of that divine presence, the true preacher will bring his message to his people.

Here, by the way, I wish to warn against the very objectionable habit on the part of some, of

carrying on conversation when two or more ministers are in the chancel or on the pulpit platform together. The talking minister who wants to converse on anything whatever during the singing or lesson or even prayer, is an offense to decorum and sets a bad example to the congregation before him. Besides, his conduct is grossly irreverent. Let the conduct and manner throughout the worship as well as in the act of preaching be quiet, respectful and reverent, as becomes the house and the message of God.

9. There is another matter which deserves attention. Let the preacher, as he reaches the conclusion of his sermon, give much care to conserving the full effect of his argument and message. The sermon should reach its climax both in composition and delivery just before or in the conclusion. The forcefulness of the argument should be sustained to the very end, without any weakening. With some speakers, there is a perceptible "letting down" toward the conclusion, a weakening in thought and action, which reacts unfavorably upon the impression of the discourse. If the preacher would drive his argument home, he must maintain his earnestness, his power and his moral mastery both of his message and his audience to the end. Thus only can he conserve the full effect of his sermon.

In a previous lecture we have referred to Spurgeon's theory of the climax of the sermon, which was also his practice, namely, that it "should end with the inculcation of some great, vital principle or

some strong, majestic declaration of God—so that that principle or that declaration should be the highest peak of the range.” Then, as he thus closed his sermon, it is said that he would lift his hand impressively, and often dramatically, pronounce the benediction and send out “the people with that principle or declaration on the very top of their minds.” This was his method of conserving the power and effect of the sermon’s message, and it left a powerful impression on the hearers.

However, this practice lays the supreme emphasis upon the sermon and we would not recommend it for general use; besides, it is very difficult to employ it successfully. With our view of the parity of the function of worship and the teaching function of the Church, it would seem far preferable to follow the close of the sermon with an earnest prayer and the singing of a hymn in harmony with the sermon’s theme, thus giving the people opportunity to answer the pastor’s message with their own expression of worship. Altogether the preacher will do well to give careful attention to the manner in which he brings his sermon and the entire service to a close. This counts for much.

In conclusion, we wish to re-affirm the great importance of a good delivery in the preaching of the sermon. However well prepared a sermonic discourse may be, it yet requires the skillfully used power of a consecrated human personality to render it fruitful of spiritual results. Under any circumstances the ministry of the pulpit should never be

slighted or considered as of minor import, and especially in view of the fact that preaching is Christ's appointed way of giving His Gospel to men. We dare not be careless of or indifferent to the manner in which we fulfill our commission to preach.

Besides, as Dean Brown, of Yale, remarks (*The Art of Preaching*), "The reluctance of multitudes of thoughtful people to sit under our preaching, after the manner of their more patient forefathers, becomes a kind of challenge to do our bit in a more interesting and effective way." We must, indeed, make our sermons interesting if we would have them to be effective. A dull sermon will fail of its purpose; and a good sermon, delivered weakly or carelessly or in a spiritless manner, will be equally ineffective and will fail to awaken and hold the interest of those who hear. Let the minister put his very soul into his sermon; let him preach it with dignity and impressive force, and at the same time make good use of all the practical principles of the art of public speaking.

There is good reason for so doing. Dean Brown, already quoted, says emphatically, "I am here to maintain against all comers that the sermon is by right, and may well be in fact, the most august expression of mind, heart and will to be heard anywhere in human society." If this be true; if the sermon is indeed, "the most august expression of mind, heart and will to be heard anywhere," then let the Christian preacher prepare himself dil-

igently by prayer and study and training for the proclamation of the Gospel message; let him preach from the heart with sincerity; let him enlist all the power of his consecrated art and personality; let him preach in the spirit; let him preach for souls. And when he has done his best in good conscience, faithfully and fearlessly, he may confidently trust the Lord to "give the increase," and to bestow the joy of the ingathered spiritual harvest.

LECTURE V.

THE PREACHER AND HIS OWN SPIRITUAL LIFE

After the Spanish-American War, a phrase sprang into general and popular use—"The man behind the guns." It was significant of the honor given to the enlisted man in the army and navy of the United States, and emphasized the truthful claim that the superior intelligence and character of the enlisted men in these two arms of the nation's service, however, good and complete the material equipment might be, were indispensable in order to secure efficiency and victory. Much of the value of a good gun in the hour of battle depends upon the character of the man who handles it.

We are thinking and speaking at this time of the preacher behind the sermon, of the man behind the proclamation of the Gospel, of the pastor's spiritual life, which is a very vital factor in the usefulness of his pulpit and pastoral ministrations. It is true that first of all the power of a sermon rests in the Gospel truth itself and in the operating presence of the Holy Spirit in the word, but it cannot be questioned that the personality of the preacher, whether good or evil, goes far to make or mar the effectiveness of the message he brings. What the preacher is, counts for much.

Several considerations should be noted, in this connection. The office of the Christian ministry stands out unique and superior among all other callings. Of course, any occupation which offers a field for honest and useful toil is honorable and is a credit to those who follow it; and there are many vocations which require special skill or ability, or superior intellectual and moral qualifications, which are noble callings, rich in blessing and service to others. Of these, I would utter no word of depreciation. But superior to all in character, in spiritual requirements, in moral responsibility and in wide scope of service, is the office of the Christian pastor.

The minister of the Gospel stands out before the community and the world, as well as before the Church, as the proclaimer of salvation for the soul, for time and eternity, as the ambassador of Jesus Christ, as the prophet of God. He is God's spokesman to men, with the mission of bringing and expounding the divine message and word in order that men may be saved and come regenerated and rejoicing into the kingdom. Therefore, this is a high calling and we do well to magnify the office of the ministry, in order that the people may hold it in proper respect and appreciation. In these days ministers often receive but scant personal courtesy from society in general, an attitude indicative of lessened respect for the office; but here the personal responsibility of every pastor appears, so to live and conduct himself in all his relation-

ships, as to compel respect for both himself and his calling.

There is no calling where both outward character and the inner life count for so much as in this one. True, character is an element of power in any man. It certainly counts in business, for the merchant who has a reputation for unswerving integrity will be held in high esteem by the community. Character is essential to the professional man, the teacher, the mechanic, the farmer, indeed, to every person, man or woman. But, while this is true, I repeat, there is no calling where character counts for so much as the office of the ministry. Here, character, what the pastor really is, is vital to success and usefulness. Without the confidence and respect of his fellowmen, he might just as well give up the ministry and seek another calling. Men simply will not listen to the appeal of a minister in whom they have no confidence or whose sincerity and devotion to the cause of the Gospel they have reason to suspect.

The mission of the minister is to evangelize, to preach the great Gospel, to influence, teach and lead others to Christ. He is to fulfill all the duties which belong to the office of a spiritual shepherd in the midst of the flock of Christ, to instruct the children, to minister to the sick, to comfort the sorrowing, to warn the erring, to encourage the weak, to assist the fallen to rise again, to point the sinner to Christ and salvation, to guide all in the way. But, in this wide field of service, it is not

simply what the pastor says that counts; but more than all, personality and the impalpable influence of an inner something, the light of the fire that burns within, are the essential basis of the power to help and serve. The Gospel is always powerful, no matter how presented, even if proclaimed by those who may not be good men, but its force is bound to be vitally weakened in the latter case and correspondingly multiplied when the preacher is a known good man. Inevitably, both Christian believers and the men of the world, with keen and searching gaze, look behind what the preacher says and want to know what he really is.

Men want reality in ministers of the Gospel; they demand sincerity, truth, consistency, the practice of the principles they teach, before they listen to the preacher. We have no reason to complain that this is so, for the very nature of his high calling makes it necessary that the minister's daily life should be upon the highest plane. His own spiritual life will always be a determining factor in measuring the extent of his usefulness as an under shepherd of souls. The reaction of known character enlarges and fructifies the influences of the man in the office. Hence, to every Christian pastor, his own spiritual life ought to be a matter of deep concern, both for his own good, and in order that he might fulfill his high calling with complete loyalty to his Lord and with helpfulness to his people.

I. Let us inquire first as to what is needful in order to lay the foundation of that spiritual life, deep and real, which is so influential in the ministry. I would suggest, —

(1) The preacher must be a converted man and possessed of fixed religious convictions. It may seem scarcely necessary to make this observation, as it is difficult to understand why an unconverted man would ever seek to enter the Christian ministry. Indeed ordinarily, only men actuated by a definite faith in Christ and an active zeal for the cause of the Gospel, ever seek this holy office. But conceivably, men, now and then, perhaps more frequently than we might think, enter the ministry from ulterior motives and without any real experience of Christ's saving grace and power. There are certainly many in the ministry without clear convictions as to the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, as is evidenced by the prevalence of the popular liberal theology in many pulpits. With many, the note of certainty is wanting, there is no clear utterance of the doctrines of sin and grace and atonement through the cross, and the living power has been taken out of the message they attempt to bring.

By way of illustration, permit me to relate this incident in the experience of the noted English minister, Dr. Charles A. Berry, an incident which he himself told to Dr. Jowett, who is authority for it. Dr. Berry, for some years before the event in question, had proved himself a brilliant preacher

but his ministry had been unfruitful of spiritual results, souls saved. "Late one night, Dr. Berry's doorbell rang. Everyone else in the house being abed, Dr. Berry himself answered the bell. At the door stood a typical Lancashire girl with a shawl over her head. 'Are you Dr. Berry?' she asked; 'I want you to come and get my mother in.' Thinking her mother was in some drunken stupor, he directed the girl to the police. 'No,' she said, 'she is dying, and I want you to get her into heaven.' The doctor did not want to go. He was enjoying the comfort of his study. 'Are there not ministers nearer?' he asked. 'Yes, but I must have you,' the girl replied, and by her importunity, forced him to go with her. When they came to the house, they found it a house of shame. Drunken carousing was going on downstairs. Upstairs, in a small room, he found the dying woman. It was in the early days of his ministry, and he was practically a Unitarian in his belief and preaching. He told the woman of the beautiful life, the loving ministeries and the noble example of Jesus. He urged her to follow Him, but she shook her head hopelessly, saying, 'That's not for the like o' me; I'm a sinful woman, and I'm dying.' 'It flashed upon me,' said Dr. Berry, 'that I had no message of help and hope for that dying woman, and like lightning I leaped in mind and heart back to the gospel my mother had taught me. I told her of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dying on the cross that just such as she might be saved; of His blood poured out for

the remission of sins, and all the blessed truths of the old, old story. And,' he added, 'Jowett, I got her in, and I got myself in too.'” From that day Dr. Berry’s new ministry was abundantly fruitful of spiritual results.

Yes, it is the dying love of Jesus Christ that saves and comforts the sinner; the cross is the dynamic of Christianity. A minister must have this spiritual possession, the conviction and experience, if he would preach so as to save others for Christ.

(2) Reasonable intellectual qualifications for the ministry, accompanied by conscientious diligence in their culture, are also needful. In making this observation, it may possibly seem that we are going beyond the limits of our subject, centering as it does on the spiritual life; but the point we make has a very close relationship to our theme. To be successful and useful in his ministry, a pastor must have an intellectual equipment which will qualify him for the effective preaching of the Gospel and for his personal dealings with all classes of men and women. It is not necessary, however, that a pastor should be possessed of unusually brilliant qualities, but it is needful that he should make a conscientious use of his equipment and be diligent in those varied studies which will serve to deepen and enlarge both his intellectual and spiritual qualifications.

High moral and spiritual quality attaches to diligence and fidelity in the use of one’s endowments in the Lord’s service. Idleness is immoral. Cer-

tainly a minister cannot be guilty of idleness intellectually; he dare not be a mental loafer, for then he will certainly write "failure" over his ministry. He ought to be a faithful student all the years of his service given in his sacred office, in order that he may grow in knowledge and intellectual power, and thus contribute to his influence for good over all who may be in his flock. We would enumerate conscientious diligence in study as among the things that belong to a minister's spiritual equipment.

(3) A third needful element in the spiritual qualification of the pastor, is an irreproachable character, a consistent Christian life from day to day. We have already dwelt upon this matter in the introduction to this discussion, but we would remind you again that character counts for much in determining the measure of pastoral and pulpit influence. Indeed, character, as "personal uprightness and purity impressing themselves upon the men who witness them," assumes a place of first and supreme importance among the elements of power in the "preacher behind the sermon." In Lord Nugent's "Memorials of John Hampden," where he is speaking of the English Reformation, he makes this general and notable observation: "Indeed, no hierarchy and no creed has ever been overthrown by the people on account only of its theoretical dogmas, so long as the practice of the clergy was incorrupt and conformable with their professions." This is true. The Church and the

ministry cannot be overthrown as long as they continue faithfully upon Christ's high plane of life and conduct.

There may have been times, as in England and America a century and more ago, when many ministers could be very careless of their daily life and indulge in drinking intoxicating liquors and in worldly pleasures without the people thinking much of it (judging by the pictures drawn by the chroniclers of those times), but that day is past. Today, in every country where true conceptions of the Gospel prevail, neither the Church nor the world will endure or respect incumbents of the ministerial office whose lives are immoral or frivolous, but they demand and expect, and rightly, that they shall live their lives upon the highest planes of ethical conduct. Phillips Brooks remarks (Lectures on Preaching, Page 51), "Whatever strange and scandalous eccentricities the ministry has sometimes witnessed, this is certainly true, and is always encouraging, that no man permanently succeeds in it who cannot make men believe that he is pure and devoted, and the only sure and lasting way to make men believe in one's devotion and purity is to be what one wishes to be believed 'to be.'"

Perhaps, often, we give too little thought to the guiding of our daily life and the manner of our conduct. Richard Baxter once said, "Many a one studies for a whole week how he shall preach well for a single hour, and hardly for a single hour how he shall live well for a whole week." Another

writer says, in commenting on the above, "If this observation contains truth, it explains at the same time the secret why pastoral cognition and oversight, government and discipline, effect so little for the good of the congregation. The sinew of strength, in this field of labor also, is to be found exclusively in the domain of life, and specially of the personal life, which must be in truth a spiritual life." (Van Oosterzee, *Pract. Theo.* 540).

St. Paul lays emphasis upon character as a requisite for a minister, as when he writes to Timothy (I Tim. 3:2-7), "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;—Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Thus the great apostle Paul lays earnest stress upon the character and the reputation of the minister of the Gospel, insisting that he "must have a good report of them which are without," that is, be held in good reputation by those who are outside the Church and who are not Christians. A true pastor will always strive so to live that his good name may never be questioned. He cannot be otherwise than jealous for his reputation.

Furthermore, the pastor's daily conduct and personal habits will necessarily be ever under the close and critical scrutiny of the Church and the public, and rightly so. When a man undertakes to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, the Church and the public have a right to expect him to live his life in thorough harmony with what he preaches. If he fails to do so, he weakens and possibly destroys his pastoral and pulpit influence. He ought to be ready to deny himself in order that he may place no stumbling block in the way of another.

Ministers who insist upon their right to drink wine or other alcoholic beverages if they so desire, who cultivate the habit of using tobacco in any of its forms, who attend upon questionable amusements which have a tendency to undermine morals, who permit themselves a looseness of speech which borders upon that which is profane or unclean, or who fall into little personal habits or idiosyncrasies, within the pulpit or without, which attract unfavorable notice, are in danger of weakening their influence far more than they perhaps realize. The people want their pastors to stand out "blameless" before the Church and the public. It will not do to invoke the well worn and thoroughly discredited "personal liberty" plea or to hold that one's personal habits are a private matter which is no concern of others, for the minister must be extremely careful of the example he sets that he may not, by his conduct, cause another to stumble.

Above all, the Christian minister must expect to deny himself for the sake of others and to practice Paul's great principle, "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." If the minister refuses to practice self-denial for Christ's sake, how can he expect anyone else to do so? The preacher of the Gospel is here to serve others after the example of his divine Lord. Jesus said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28). He came not to do His own will but the will of His Father in heaven. The Christian minister is here, not to do what he wants and wills, but to do His Lord's will and to render self-forgetful and unselfish service to those to whom he is called to minister. And he who is unwilling gladly to sacrifice for Christ's sake and the kingdom's sake, and to deny himself for his people's sake is unworthy of the high calling which he has undertaken.

In connection with this thought of the influence of the minister's daily walk and conversation, Paxton Hood relates this story of St. Francis of Assisi:—St. Francis one day stepped down into the cloisters of his monastery, and, laying his hand on the shoulder of a young monk, said:—"Brother, let us go down into the town and preach."

So they went forth, the venerable father and the young man, conversing as they went. They wound their way down the principal streets, around the

lowly alleys and lanes, and even to the outskirts of the town and to the village beyond, till they found themselves back approaching the monastery again. Then said the young monk, "Father, when shall we begin to preach?" St. Francis looked kindly down upon his young companion and answered: "My child, we have been preaching; we were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen, looked at; our behaviour has been remarked; and so we have delivered a morning sermon. Ah, my son, it is of no use that we walk anywhere to preach, unless we preach as we walk." Beecher defined preaching as "the communication of truth through personality." Hence, the importance of character.

(4) Looking deeper yet to the very roots of the character and the influence of which we have been speaking, we observe that there must be maintained the inner life of love and sacrificial unselfishness. Character is determined by the inner, secret life of a man. It is ever true that, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34); and also, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). It is self-evident that, if a pastor would stand before his church and the community as a leader and adviser in spiritual things, he must himself be spiritual. The secret springs of life must be kept pure and the inner life of faith must be cultivated, while the highest ideals should ever be cherished. Spirituality is the ever-present consciousness of religious relationship and duty to God and to Christ.

In the spirit, then, of unwearied devotion to Christ, in the spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice, ready to serve others for Christ's sake and in brotherly love, the minister will live the blessed life of fellowship with his Lord, which will qualify him to wield that influence which will tell for the salvation of sinners and the building up of believers in the faith. Such was the life of Paul, who said, "For to me to live is Christ." Such was the life of Luther and Francke and Pastor Harms, of Richard Baxter and John Knox, of Muhlenberg and Mary Lyon, of Schwartz and David Livingstone, and of thousands of others, devoted followers of Christ whose work and influence have told mightily for Christ and His kingdom. Let the life be a Christ-filled life, let it be a spiritual life, and then one may be qualified to be a faithful minister of the Gospel.

(5) Again, the true pastor will be stirred by a passion for souls and zeal for service. The very presence of unsaved men and women around him will be the sufficient call to service. With the deep conviction of the truth of the Gospel and of the lost estate of sinners, and with the love of Christ in his heart, he cannot do otherwise than turn his prayers and his energies to the work of seeking and leading souls to Him who alone is able to save. In this he will find his deepest joy and his most real compensation; indeed there is nothing that gives greater satisfaction to a pastor than when he can see some one rejoicing in new-found salvation, of

which he has been the humble agent. In his pastoral work he must be diligent. I said a little while ago that a minister cannot be an intellectual idler or a mental loafer, but I would add that neither can he be an idler in his pastoral work nor a loafer in his spiritual ministrations. He will be ready for self-denying service for very love of his work and of souls.

I am aware that it is a very high ideal of the pastor's life and work which I have been outlining and I am equally aware that it is not the easiest thing to realize it in ourselves. The temptations which beset a minister's path are just as real and possibly as numerous as those which meet other men, though they differ much in nature. They may be rather spiritual and intellectual in form, less visible than others,—of the nature of intellectual pride, self-righteousness, a selfish professionalism growing unsympathetic, ambition for place, even worldliness; but they are very real. Luther said once that "the devil dwells nearer the preacher than any of his people." It requires the steady maintenance of our spiritual warfare, just as St. Paul found it necessary in his own experience, to overcome the evil which besets us, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We all know very well that our parishioners are mistaken when they remark, as they often do, that it must be easy for a minister to be good and to live a Christian life. We must fight our battles too, but there is the stronger incentive and the greater help to be se-

cured, by reason of the nature of our calling; and we ought, therefore, to be earnest and persistent in seeking the highest possible growth in grace and spiritual life. Like Paul, we should have the wholesome fear, lest we ourselves should be "cast-a-way."

II. We have been speaking of the needful elements in the spiritual life of a pastor; now another question presents itself,—How can he maintain this high ideal of life and character, so vital to his ministry?

There is to be observed far too frequently in the life history of many a minister of the Gospel, that which is nothing less than a great spiritual tragedy. The average young pastor enters upon his ministry usually with a very high ideal of his calling, a sensitive conscience, a warm devotion to his Lord, a warm-hearted enthusiasm for service, consecrated energy and an unselfish ambition to do his best for Christ and the Church and lost sinners. As the years pass, a subtle danger to his spiritual life confronts him while he is largely unconscious of it, a peril due partly to a certain measure of disillusionment with reference to some of his ideals, partly to his necessary contact with a world which he finds is unbelievably sordid, selfish and wicked in many of its main currents, and partly to disappointment and discouragement arising from his inevitable inability to secure as prompt a response from a sluggish church or an indifferent public as he feels he ought to have. The result too often is evident in a slow but perceptible wearing down of his ideals, a

dulling of the edge of his conscience, a slowing down of his energy for service, a growing impatience with people, even a questioning of his calling, and then a sinking into the dull gray of a professionalism out of which the spirit is lost. This is the spiritual tragedy to which I refer; and this is the peril which has threatened all of us in a greater or less degree,—the letting down from the high plane of spiritual life which is so vital to the Christian ministry. Hence the question, How can the pastor maintain his spiritual life?

(1) I would answer, first, by saying (and it may seem a very trite and self-evident suggestion), that he ought to make constant and faithful use of his Bible. Of course, the pastor will of necessity use it for his sermon preparation (at least he will if he is an orthodox, evangelical preacher), but I mean that he should use his Bible devotionally, searching the Scriptures with reference to his own spiritual needs and the nurture of his own soul. The pastor needs to be saved and to be kept saved just as much as any of his parishioners, and he needs to be fed on the Bread of Life just as they do. It is true that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," and it must be that to the minister. But it will be so only as he makes the Word of God his daily meditation and as he searches it to find the message which is personal to himself.

Yes, we need the serious, devotional reading of our Bibles every day. It is not enough for us to

study them for our sermons and to secure a message for others, but we need first of all to learn what God speaks to our own souls, and through our own experience of His Word, we shall be able to make our people feel that God is speaking to them when we bring His message to the Church.

(2) For his own spiritual steadiness, the pastor ought to accustom himself to see the encouraging things in his pastoral experience. As we have already said, he will soon find that the world is very sordid and full of sin and he will find some of his young people and some who are older, for whose Christian usefulness he had high hopes, grow indifferent under the lure of the world and fall away, while his heart will be heavy with disappointment. If he permits this darker side to receive the bulk of his attention and notice, if he dwells too much upon the evil about him, he may be in danger of drifting away from his faith. But there is a bright side, a glorious side to the Gospel and the life of the Church. This the minister ought always to see.

On every hand he will find redeemed men and women, steadily growing in grace and Christian character; he will see the Church in her ever enlarging ministry of love and mercy to the needy world; he will have the joy of seeing souls under his leadership transformed by saving grace into regenerated men and women; and he will have some of those old saints who have grown gray in the Master's service and whose lives, out of a rich experience, are benedictions to the rest of the church.

He will see the leavening power of the Gospel on society and will mark the regular forward march of the missionary enterprise as it goes on toward the triumph of the Kingdom of God. Here is always unfailing ground of cheer and encouragement to the Christian pastor, and he will live on a higher spiritual plane if he keeps in sight of the encouraging things and it will steady him.

(3) I would observe, further, that the pastor ought to keep himself in warm fellowship with the Church, not with the world. This may be taken for granted and it may seem strange that I make such an observation; yet it is needed. The natural place for a minister to seek his fellowships and closest friends is in the congregation which he serves; he is supposed to be apart from the world. This is as it should be. Of course, he will seek every possible means which is legitimate to come into affectionate and sympathetic touch with the unsaved and win them to repentance and salvation, for Christ and the Church. But he cannot compromise his calling by living with them upon their lower plane.

I am aware that this view does not harmonize with some of the theories which are widely held. There is a notion abroad that ministers ought to get down to the level of the people about them, be "men among men," as they say, seek comradeship with them, and do many of the things they do, in order to gain influence over them for good. Within wise limits this is possible and may sometimes be

advisable. But there is a danger in it. I have even heard a man argue that a minister ought to go to the pool rooms and play billiards and pool with the men there, smoke with them and have a "good time" with them. Such a policy cannot work, for those very men would have no respect for the preacher of high ideals of life, who came down to their level. We have often heard the phrase, "the store-box minister," referring to the pastor who loafs around the business section of the town, perhaps sitting on a store-box, at least in the older days, exchanging stories and jokes with his cronies. The men of the street may have admired him as a companion, but when they needed spiritual consolation and help, they wanted a different sort of a man. And, in certain cases of "store-box ministers," I have known, the congregations were anxious to get rid of them as they were not doing the work of the church and were sacrificing their influence. In order to be spiritually minded, a pastor must live upon a high plane of conduct, under the influence of the Christian fellowship of those who are like-minded. And I am convinced that he will find his finest inspiration and help, outside his secret fellowship with his Lord, in his association with the older saints of the church, who have come into the rich maturity of Christian experience. The writer is glad to bear his testimony to the influence upon himself exerted by some of the fine old Christians in his congregation in the early years of his ministry. Many a time he came away from a visit

with one of these old saints, quickened in faith and cheered by the latter's steady and joyful trust, and feeling that he had received a benediction. A young pastor will do well to cultivate the fellowship of the good old people in his parish, for his own good as well as theirs. Of course, there may be some unpleasant personalities met with, but the writer's experience has been exceedingly favorable. My point, however, is that a pastor will be spiritually blessed by maintaining closest fellowship with the church, with Christian people.

(4) Again, in order to maintain the spiritual life, there is the need of the power of the Holy Spirit through daily fellowship with Christ. Our Lord, just before His Ascension, promised the disciples, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you," and the promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. This promise abides for the Church today, and the Lord's prophets may claim the power. Every pastor needs to be set on fire spiritually but this result can come only by the incentive and the propulsion of the indwelling Spirit of God. No artificial power can take the place of that which comes from on high. Pretence and professionalism cannot bring the needed help in the sick room or in the ministry in the homes, as does the sincere, warm-hearted sympathy of spiritual power.

Neither can a mechanical elocution, no matter how perfect, put convincing power into preaching, nor can any artificial stimulus take the place of that

divine impulsion, given of the Lord. I know of a man who is pastor of a congregation of some prominence, who has acknowledged that he always took a drink of whiskey before going into the pulpit, in order to stimulate and help him preach. This man is considered an able preacher and a successful minister, but aside from the question of the righteousness of the act, I question whether the results of his ministry can be anything more than superficial, when he substitutes whiskey for the Holy Spirit; and if he relies upon the artificial stimulus instead of that which is real and spiritual, he will most certainly deteriorate in his spiritual life and fall into mere professionalism, if not worse.

Let the minister live in closest fellowship with Christ by faith and let him seek that power which comes from on high, and he will himself grow in spiritual grace and power and his ministry will have that profounder and richer blessing which alone is worth while.

(5) The last requisite for the development and support of the spiritual life of the Christian pastor, which I would mention, is that of prayer. The vital place of prayer in the Christian life is so evident, that there is no need of arguing the point in addressing a group of future ministers; and I am not going to argue the question, but just emphasize it. Prayer opens the way into the presence chamber of God, and every Christian and, especially, every minister, ought to seek that presence often for his own good. "The effectual, fer-

vent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." If this be true, as it is, then everyone ought to make use of the privilege of prayer for the sake of his own soul and for the sake of the effectiveness of his pastoral ministrations. The prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian, and it is further unthinkable that a prayerless minister could ever be really successful in the Lord's work. Indeed, a prayerless minister is an anomaly. And yet the Christian minister is beset by the temptation to minimize the place of prayer.

All the great heroes of the faith were men who were mighty in prayer. Such were Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Daniel. So were Paul and John and Peter. Luther was a great man of prayer and said that he felt that he could not get along without at least three hours for prayer every day. John Wesley and John Knox rested heavily upon the staff of prayer, and so did Francke and Pastor Harms, Moody and Theodore Cuyler, David Livingstone and Hudson Taylor. We need the same staff and the quiet hour which we may spend in the presence chamber of the Lord, in company with His Word. I know that it is not easy in these hurrying times, when every active pastor is almost overwhelmed with the multiplying details of the complex organization of his parish, to secure the needed time for the quiet hour with God. We may not be able to find the three hours like Luther, but we should secure at least a little time every day for quiet meditation upon the Scriptures and for prayer. Out

of that sacred time will come the power to live in Christ and for Christ and to serve with multiplying spiritual fruits. Let us not neglect to pray.

And now, in conclusion, let me add that as the calling of the Christian ministry is the highest of all callings in its bearing upon time and eternity, the pastor cannot do otherwise than give deep concern and much prayer to his own inner spiritual life and his growth in grace. He must live worthily of his high calling. Otherwise, he fails miserably. But if he does live up to his privilege and moral obligation, he will find the joy unspeakable. And as he goes into his pulpit on the Lord's Day to preach the Gospel of salvation, to call his people to repentance, faith and a Christian life of service, his instructions and appeals will have added force because he has set an example of godly character as an ambassador of Christ. Unconsciously, his people will feel and recognize the influence of the life of one who has walked closely with God, behind the sermons which he preaches, and will be the more ready to respond to the Master's call given through the pastor. Remember all the words written so earnestly and seriously by St. Paul in his two epistles to Timothy, concerning his work in the ministry, and especially his exhortation, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Tim. 4:16).

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